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SHORT STORIES

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 617. FOR WEEK ENDING OCTOBER 27TH, 1900. [ONE PENNY.

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No. 617.] [ONE PENNY.

For the Week Ending Oct. 27th, 1900.

HIS MYSTERIOUS CORRESPONDENT.

"MISS MARSHFIELD," said the junior partner of the great firm of Vaughn, Cleveland, and Vaughn, "I want you to do me a favour."

He was sitting on a corner of his desk, hands in pockets, and swinging one foot, rather impatiently his secretary thought.

"Well, I shall be pleased to. What is it?"

"Have you read any of those letters signed Nevada in the 'Metropolitan?'"

"Nevada?" Miss Marshfield considered for a moment, then replied: "Yes I have. Why do you ask?"

"Well, you have excellent taste in literature. Don't you consider them remarkable?"

"Why, I don't know that I do, though they are fairly good, I believe."

"Ah, you are penurious with adjectives, I recollect. Now, I think they are far above the average, and I should like to discover the identity of this Nevada. She interests me intensely."

"You think Nevada is a woman, then?"

"Why, yes, I should judge so. Shouldn't you?"

"I haven't given the subject much thought."

"Oh, I'm reasonably sure it's a woman, and what I want of you is to discover her for me."

Miss Marshfield looked her astonishment, and asked:

"Why not try it yourself?"

"I have tried, and failed ignominiously. The unspeakableness of the sphinx is garrulity beside the silence those publishers have chosen to wrap about Nevada, and there seems no way of breaking it."

"But the silence is probably according to the instructions of Nevada herself. so how can I hope to break it?"

"Why, that's what I can't exactly see. I thought perhaps your woman's wit would suggest a way. You seem to be on a friendly footing with literary people; you might get some information from that source."

"You are wrong about my footing with literary people. I know very few, and am afraid I cannot be of the least use to you in this matter."

"What a wet blanket you can be on occasion. Miss Marshfield, I insist on being shown the respect due to the tail of this firm. Won't you please turn round again for a moment?"

"There's a large grist of letters to-day," she reminded him, turning partially about.

"Yes, yes, I daresay, there generally is; but, Miss Marshfield, I'm not joking about this thing. I want to know the author of those letters—man or woman."

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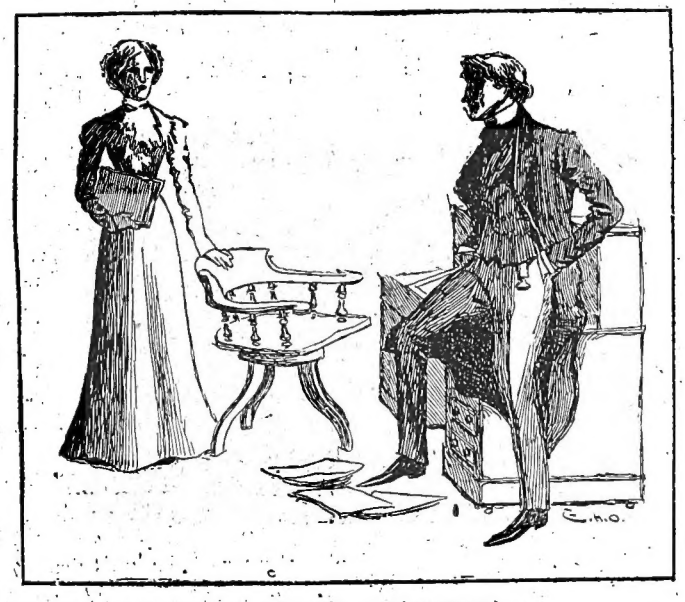
"The question of sex does not influence your desire for acquaintance, then?"

The secretary's penetrating gaze was fixed on her typewriter, and she asked the question with apparent carelessness.

"Not at all; though, as I told you, I feel reasonably sure it is a woman."

"But granting that, you cannot feel reasonably sure



"HAVE YOU READ ANY OF THOSE LETTERS SIGNED NEVADA IN THE "METROPOLITAN"."

she is a person you would wish to know. She may be a nobody notwithstanding those articles."

"Not likely, I should say. Such talents as hers don't go a-begging. You know there is no caste in genius."

"No? I am glad of that."

"You speak as though you had been doubtful on the subject."

"Not in my own mind; but I don't know what might be your opinion."

"I see you are not inclined to be enthusiastic with me over this new writer. The simple truth is that he or she, whichever it may be, has cast a spell upon me. I never saw such imagery, such magic with words."

For a member of a firm dealing in machinery and requiring a practical knowledge of business, Russell Vaughn was about as unpractical a man as could have been found; that is to say, he would have been if he had given his imagination free rein and followed after the things which most allured him.

But the mind of Vaughn, the elder, was fervently set on seeing his favourite son in his own place at the head of the firm, and Russell was pre-eminently a dutiful son. He had sat at the desk on which he now reclined for ten years, and the constant effort to discipline his faculties down to the basis of machinery had worn indelible little grooves between his eyebrows.

He had been a deep student, was still a deep student, so far as his duties would permit. The powers alone knew in what firmament he might have shone had he not sprung from a commercial race, with whom precedent was immutable law. His grandfather had dealt in machinery, likewise his father, so he, too, dealt in machinery, though under silent protest.

Previous to being taken into the firm he had spent several years in foreign travel, and these had been the happiest years of his life. He had recorded their experiences in a small volume, written in a whimsical style, which publishers seemed to find "not available," for after two or three trials of them he had concluded to "climb up some other way," as he laughingly expressed it to his secretary. The book was brought out at his own expense, and, though it had not become famous, had received many favourable press notices and been warmly welcomed by people not too much sated with travel to look at it through his fanciful eyes.

Miss Marshfield had read it and given it an honoured place in her library. She had spoken warmly of many things it contained as agreeing with impressions of her own formed amid the same scenes, and this served to strengthen the friendship which had grown up between them during the three years in which she had been with the firm, a friendship platonic to all appearances.

Of the two, the stenographer had the greater adaptability. In the three years she had mastered the details of their immense trade, and her keen insight and quick memory were relied on by all three partners.

"Talk about a woman being illogical," said the elder Vaughn, "that young woman in the office is worth a dozen rattle-pated dudes," and in proof of his appreciation her surroundings were comfortable to a degree bordering on luxury.

"Such magic with words," echoed Miss Marshfield thoughtfully. "Have you considered that there is apt to be a wide breach between the personality of an author and his writings?"

"No, I had not thought of it—not particularly."

"I could point you to many notable examples."

"Oh, yes, I daresay there are examples, but you must admit that in a world the size of this there are examples of almost everything."

"I did not mean to imply a rule, of course, but I think genius is often like a bright-winged spirit confined in a house of very common clay. Your Nevada might prove a disappointment if you succeeded in finding her. Better be content with the articles and not seek to know the author. You might otherwise be poorer by the loss of an illusion."

She looked at him with a laugh in her eyes, and resolutely struck the keys of her typewriter.

"You mustn't bother me any more," she asserted. "I am behind with my work as it is."

"I ask for assistance and you give me axioms," he retorted. "Nevertheless, I am not discouraged. Your opinions are usually worth looking into, but this is too gauzy."

"Go on," she said over her shoulder; "never mind my opinions, but when you find yourself disenchanted don't forget that I warned you."

This ended the discussion for that day, and during many following days Vaughn never mentioned Nevada. Then one morning he came into the office looking unusually cheerful, threw off his coat, and began tossing about the mail on his desk in an absent-minded fashion. His secretary said nothing, rightly opining that he would soon disclose the cause of his satisfaction. Presently he paused in the act of opening a letter, and said:

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"I feel greatly elated this morning. Can you guess why?"

"I am not good at guessing."

"Well, then, I shall have to tell you. I've found Nevada—or rather, I've been able to communicate with her through her publishers, and the result is that she has consented to correspond with me as the boys trade jack-knives, 'out o' sight an' unseen.'"

"Indeed. How did you manage it?"

"By means of my prestige as the author of 'From Sea to Sea,' which is the first intimation I ever received that I had any such prestige. I played the card in desperation and it won. Quite romantic, don't you think?"

"Well, rather, if Nevada is a woman. Have you ascertained that?"

"No, I don't know yet, but I shall soon learn. It won't be possible to keep me mystified long. But all thought of that aside, I am promising myself untold pleasure from this correspondence. An interchange of ideas with a writer so versatile as Nevada is one of the keenest pleasures in life."

"I don't know anything about that, never having had a regular correspondent."

"H'm."

Vaughn went on with his work after this careless comment. He was not more than ordinarily selfish, but it never occurred to him that his secretary might possibly have a personal feeling with regard to this correspondent. If she had, however, it would not have been suspected from her manner.

Some days after this conversation he pulled a letter out of his pocket, and handing it over to her, said:

"Now tell me what you think about Nevada being a woman."

Miss Marshfield took the letter, smoothed it with her long slender fingers, and asked:

"Do you think this perfectly fair?"

"Certainly—why not? It would be a sin to keep such a letter as that to myself."

"Why do you adopt the pseudonym of Darwin?" she asked presently.

"Oh, for no reason, only it was the first that occurred to me. You see I was to use one and not to seek to penetrate hers."

"Hers? You are sure it is a woman, then, at last?"

"Can you doubt it after reading that letter? I think she is certainly a woman, and a young one at that."

"Oh," said the secretary drily, "and beautiful, too, no doubt. You seemed to have gathered a large amount of information from this letter, while I see absolutely nothing in it which betrays either age or gender. In this day of vigorous writing it is impossible to tell who is behind an article, whether man or woman, but if I were to judge by one or two expressions here I should say that the writer ought to be a big-bearded man."

"Oh, Miss Marshfield, positively you are the last person I should have accused of jealousy."

* * * * *

For a year this romantic correspondence went on, growing constantly more absorbing to Russell Vaughn, and it appeared, from the frequency of her letters, the same to Nevada.

On the days Vaughn received one of these letters he was absent-minded to a marked degree, and the burden of responsibility for that day rested on the stenographer, but she uttered no complaint, merely reminding him occasionally of neglected duties.

Sometimes he would spring suddenly to his feet in an abstracted mood and pace the office floor, sometimes stand before a window and gaze long out over the adjoining vacant lots where were piled a few pieces of old machinery. His secretary watched him narrowly at these times, and one day when she called his attention to something which needed it he turned abruptly and said:

"Miss Marshfield, there's no doubt about your being a treasure. You are the one who should be junior partner here. Upon my word, I'm good for nothing."

Then the slight, black-gowned figure had turned towards him.

"Let me advise you," she said. "I think you had better give up this correspondence of yours; it is doing you no good. Better drop it and forget it, and attend to business."

"Drop it! You don't know what you are saying. Have you any idea what part this friendship has come to play in my daily life? Now don't, please, set me down for a drivelling idiot. I am not going about with my heart on my sleeve telling everyone what Nevada is to me, but there's something about you which invites my confidence notwithstanding that your criticisms have been rather acrid. I would give ten years of my life for the privilege of seeing Nevada's face, of hearing her talk as she writes. Why, did I show you her letters on Egyptology? I thought I knew a few things, but

"HE HAD SPENT SEVERAL YEARS ON FOREIGN TRAVEL."

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she makes me blush for my ignorance. Egypt! The very name is a mine of mystic delights under her facile pen. Scoff at me if you will, Miss Marshfield, you with your cool wit and calm judgment, but I would willingly exchange my best prospects in machinery for a voyage down the N le with Nevada as a companion."

Miss Marshfield was rather paler than usual, but she only said quietly:

"And she eludes you persistently?"

"Yes, and I can't see why. I have done my best. I have brought all the power there is in the world to the siege, and unfortunately words are my only available weapons. She promises an interview sometime in the future, but continually puts me off. She has seen me, too, which doesn't seem all round fair."

Miss Marshfield looked at him with mirth in her eyes.

"What now?" he exclaimed in a vexed tone. "Look here, Miss Marshfield, you're getting far too much fun out of me. I see my garrulity needs muzzling. It doesn't seem like you, though; I thought you'd have some sympathy."

"And so I have, but I can't help contemplating the possibility of your correspondent being some leathery old woman whose romance is all in the past, and who is amusing herself by warming it over the flame of your young passion. Of course she couldn't show herself, because that would mean—curtain."

"You are talking most unheard-of nonsense for you. No leathery old woman would write with such fire and eloquence. She is young and enthusiastic. You have not seen all her letters."

"No? You might have shown them to me."

She looked hard at him as she spoke, and he actually blushed under her scrutiny.

"Ah, I see," she went on mercilessly, "Nevada has been making love to you."

He neither acknowledged nor denied, but turned abruptly away for the first time in their acquaintance angry with her.

"Supposing," she went on as if she had not noticed, "that you meet your Nevada, and find her, though attractive to the eye, unlovely in character, would her genius obliterate the effect?"

"Utterly impossible for a person who writes like that to be spiritually unlovely."

"There you are in error. Neither bad nor good qualities are absolute in real people. Nature has its moods and tenses, and I have been told that writers as a class are especially susceptible to them; in fact, that it's a very good rule to know your pet author at a respectful distance."

"Well," said Vaughn, trying to throw off his sullenness, "you may be perfectly right—I daresay you are, but all this is too complex for me. I am not an adept in analysing character, and to tell the truth, don't think I care to be. Not, however, that I mean to disparage the habit. Probably it is a very good one, only not congenial to my tastes."

"No," said Miss Marshfield, thoughtfully, "it is not congenial to your tastes. You care so much more for ideals than for actualities."

Vaughn had been standing with his back towards her looking out of the window. Suddenly he wheeled about and stood beside her desk.

"Miss Marshfield, I should like to know why you couldn't have been Nevada."

"Why do you say that?" she ejaculated in surprise.

"Because a passion for you would be the very safest thing I can imagine."

"We must do our best in the calling whereunto we are called," she answered. "It is not always given us to choose, and really, Mr. Vaughn, I can't think that I should have been any more worthy of your respect if I had written those letters."

"Respect? No, certainly not, but there is a world-wide difference between the feeling of respect and——"

"Infatuation with a myth. Yes, you are right. You see I understand these things for I have been something of a hero-worshipper myself. I can remember ever so many gods I had in my childhood, and with one or possibly two exceptions they all proved of the earth—earthy. They made me miserable, too, until I came under the care of the best woman who ever lived. She taught me that all humanity is human, and ideals seldom or never attained."

"You are speaking of your foster-mother, are you not?"

"Yes, she was the wisest woman I ever knew. She taught me how to conquer the ills of life."

"Miss Marshfield, it occurs to me that I must seem very puerile and silly to you."

"No, indeed. If I have said anything to imply that, forgive me—I never meant it. I do think, though, that it's best to have no enthusiasms; they leave such heart-aches in their wake. Hardly anything in life comes up to the expectations of an impulsive person, while if we expect little or nothing the good that comes to us seems a full measure. Have you not found it so sometimes?"

"Now that you mention it I believe I have frequently; but where, let me ask, did you get all this wisdom? One does not learn these things by being told them."

"I have lived a great deal of it, and the rest I have seen others live."

"You say your friend taught you to conquer the ills of life. Now, how for instance would you overcome the fate which held you bound to duties of a prosaic sort when you were continually longing to shake them off and fly to the other end of the earth?"

"I should patiently bide the shaking-off time. You know 'all things come to him who waits,' though my experience proves that they are not always satisfactorily attained."

"Not always, no; but how can a fellow tell that they won't be till he tries?"

"I have often thought," said the secretary, musingly, "that it is a great pity to spend the best years of one's life in accumulating the means of subsistence. If the needs of civilisation were fewer it would materially decrease the miseries of the world."

"For my part," said Vaughn quickly, "I could be content with the Indian's blanket, or a yellow robe and begging bowl. There are infinite possibilities in the latter. Give me the freedom of the globe and civilisation may have its fol-de-rols."

Six weeks after this conversation found Vaughn with still no clue to the identity of his correspondent. All her letters reached him through her publishers, but they were gradually growing less frequent and colder in tone. It was very strange, he thought, for it had not been long since in one of those thrilling epistles which so elated him she had exclaimed:

"Almost thou persuadest me, Darwin, that the only things desirable in this world are you, a moonlight night, and the Nile; but yet wait a little longer. You shall see my face—I swear it."

Now it seemed she was trying to get rid of him without fulfilling this promise.

Miss Marshfield watched his growing disinclination

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for business with annoyance, and finally she said to him:

"Mr. Vaughn, you are not well."

"I?" he returned in surprise. "Oh, yes, I am always well." A moment after he added: "Queer my father said something about that, too, but I have never been ill in my life, and certainly am not now."

She said no more, but watched him furtively as he sat over his work, the two little wrinkles in his forehead drawn into a positive scowl. She noticed that he was sallow, thinner in flesh than usual, and that his eyes bore evidence of insomnia. The afternoon light fell across him, and for the first time his secretary was fully conscious of the change in him. Involuntarily she let her hands slip from the keys as she uttered an exclamation of alarm.

Vaughn looked up and met her gaze. There was something in it besides alarm, too—something that astonished him. It seemed like a look of tender pity, but he thought it hardly possible that he could have read it aright.

Supposing he had. He felt almost suffocated for a moment, and as Miss Marshfield dropped her eyes and coloured slightly, he sprang to his feet and asked if the room wasn't uncomfortably warm. She made some unintelligible reply, and he lowered a window; then, instead of resuming his chair came and stood beside her while her nimble fingers played rather nervously over the keys. At length he spoke.

"Your eyes would entice the truth out of a confirmed liar, Miss Marshfield. I may as well tell you the whole sickening story, though of course you'll say it was to be expected. She's given me the sack—without even the common decency of saying good-bye. She's been trying it for a long time, and now she's done it. Very shabby of her, don't you think?"

"It undoubtedly seems shabby treatment from your point of view, but it was the most merciful thing she could do."

"Because why?"

"Because that correspondence was unfitting you for business and making you more visionary and idealistic than ever, which wasn't at all necessary."

"You speak with your accustomed plainness."

"Yes I am in earnest, but I hope you are not offended."

"How should I be—with you? When you have not been giving me good advice—which, by the way, I wish I had taken—you have been doing my neglected work. I have no reason for complaining of you, at all events. Things have turned out about as you predicted. She can't be a person of good principles—she must be a flirt. She—she must have found somebody else."

"Oh, let us cover her with the mantle of charity, and suppose her nothing bad but only wrinkled and ugly. She couldn't help that, you know. The transcendent love you offered her would have tempted any woman——"

"How do you know I offered her transcendent love?"

"I have heard you talk of her several times."

"Come, Miss Marshfield, spare me. I'm ready now to assent to all the spiteful things you've said about her. I do hereby solemnly swear that to the best of my knowledge and belief she's a big-bearded man; that in addition to, and notwithstanding that, she's a leathery old woman who has been amusing herself with my feeble-mindedness, and warming over her stale romance at the expense of my idiotic passion."

"Did I really mention feeble-mindedness?"

"Oh, you might as well. But this isn't wading through that pile of letters. Some one has got to take a trip, and owing to my father's fancy that I have been confined too closely of late, it's been decided that I am

CAME AND STOOD BESIDE HER WHILE HER NIMBLE FINGERS PLAYED RATHER NERVOUSLY OVER THE KEYS.

the one. My father, you see, doesn't know about Nevada."

"No," said Miss Marshfield, scarcely heeding the latter part of his remark. "Shall you be gone long?"

"Two or three weeks, I think," he replied, and became absorbed in his reading.

At six o'clock they had finished, and then, as she was donning her street clothes, Vaughan remembered certain things it was necessary to talk over in view of the intended trip. So they lingered by the fire without lighting up because it was pleasanter to talk in the twilight.

The business affairs they discussed were not of vital importance, but the secretary seemed not to notice that, and the junior partner talked on leisurely, rocking his office chair. The firelight played over their faces, and through the uncurtained window shone the first refulgence of a full moon.

This was the window which commanded a view of the lots with their lumber of old machinery. There was no snow, and over the motley array the moon poured a silvery flood, lending it a weird interest it was far from possessing by daylight. The sharp angles and ugly protuberances of the pile were softened by the hazy

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glow that made the shadows seem to hide strange things—mystical things—things which belonged to the land of dreams.

The spell of the hour was upon these two as they sat there by the fire, and neither was willing to break it. They talked in low tones, with throbbing pauses between their inconsequent sentences.

Presently Vaughn leant forward to poke the fire, and when he settled back again he was nearer to Miss Marshfield than before—so near that his left hand easily reached and clasped her right, which lay on the arm of her chair. She did not attempt to withdraw it, but made some irrelevant remark to which he returned a vague reply. She looked at the coals, but his eyes were on her face.

"Miss Marshfield." The name was uttered very softly, and he bent closer still. "Could you ever—would it be possible——"

Her look stopped him. She had turned on him those speaking eyes which sometimes seemed to belie the calmness of her demeanour, and there was no mistaking their expression this time. He had understood as well as if she had put it into words.

Thoroughly agitated, he rose, and standing behind her chair laid his hand on her shoulder as he said unsteadily:

"Miss Marshfield, you force me to believe in the luck of fools. In a natural course of events you would despise me. Thank Heaven for the unnatural. Don't speak, please. I'm afraid of your speech; it might contradict what your eyes have told me, and it's too good to be contradicted."

He had bent lower until his dark locks mingled with hers.

Miss Marshfield did not speak, she was shaking with silent laughter.

"What is it?" he asked. "More fun at my expense? My dear girl, I can't blame you, but I have a strange feeling that it is your image I have had in my heart all the time, and never a dream of a myth. Explain that, will you?"

Then Miss Marshfield spoke, and this was what she said:

"Darwin, almost thou persuadest me that the only things desirable in this world are you, a moonlight night, and the Nile."

"What!" exclaimed Vaughn, straightening up, well-nigh paralysed. "How do you know she said that?"

"Because she and I are one."

Impetuously he whirled her chair about until she faced him.

"You are Nevada!"

"Yes. Is it incredible?"

"Only in the light of your outrageous equivocation."

"Oh, I didn't equivocate much, it wasn't necessary. You were very easy prey, Darwin."

"Was I indeed? But this minute I recollect a dozen awful fibs you told me about Nevada. For instance, you said——"

"Yes, I know. I'll admit my course was a little irregular, but you see I was all the time easing my conscience with the promise of an explanation. It was very exciting, and I admit that temptation made me carry it too far. Forgive me, pray. I have never romanced before, but you wrote such letters—ah, such letters, Darwin. You are a past master in love-making. I don't think I could have concluded to give up the correspondence so soon but for the effect it was having on you."

"I was something undone, that's a fact. And to think it was you all the time. Do you remember when I asked why you couldn't have been Nevada? You might have told me then."

"But I was somewhat piqued to see you so coolly setting me down as inferior to your correspondent. It was evident your plain secretary had not the ghost of a chance."

"So then you wanted me to fall in love with my secretary?"

"Perhaps I did. The possibility never presented itself to you, however."

"Oh, Miss Marshfield, I have always adored you, as you well know, but somehow it seemed to me that you were not the sort of woman to respond. Many a time I have said to myself, 'Miss Marshfield is a delightful chum, but she wouldn't listen to a love story.'"

"I think the very gods would listen and capitulate to such a story as you have to tell. What then could be expected of me whose wild desire was with you in Egypt, even when you thought me most prosaic?"

The two chairs were close together now in the shadows which the firelight was throwing into fantastic shapes.

"The wonder of it!" said Vaughn. "Miss Marshfield, invaluable Miss Marshfield, who will keep me sober and sensible whether I will or no, and Nevada, the mate of my soul. Oh, Nevada, we shall float down the Nile together. In fancy I see already the dark-gliding waters and the glint of the moonlight on the pyramids."

PARMA GENTRY.

I THINK THE VERY GODS WOULD LISTEN AND CAPITULATE TO SUCH A STORY AS YOU HAVE TO TELL.

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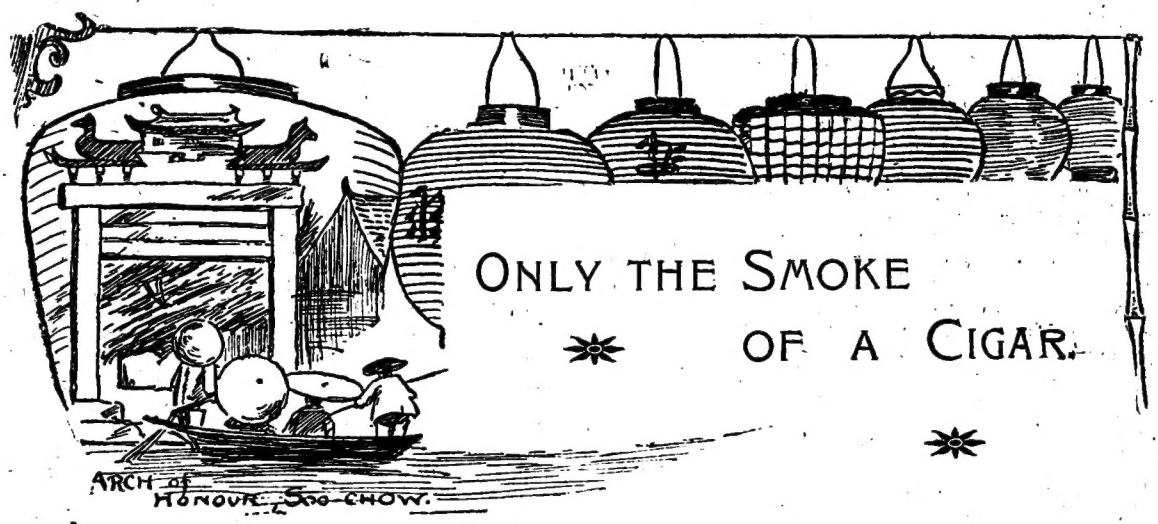

ONLY THE SMOKE OF A CIGAR.

Ay de mi! We call ourselves free and independent beings, and yet the faintest scent or sound, or fleeting glance of places long unseen, has power to bear us on waves of memory, whether we would go or not. The cigar I am smoking this evening is one of a kind I have not smoked for years. Memories lie rolled in its fragrant leaf: its curling smoke wafts back my thoughts to the time when I was living in a far off country; to the days when I and my wife were young, and the children who have grown up and gone out into the world, were only "the dearest little things" that ever we set eyes on.

Our big cattle farm lay in a wild and lonely part of Natal. Fine grass-land undulated into the misty distance of the horizon, or was broken by the grand wall of the Cathamba mountain range. At our feet ran the river, placid at times, at times tumultuous, as beseems a river fed by sudden thunder storms and excitable mountain streams. "And like the river ran the life"; bright pictures float upwards in the air to-night, soft lights and shadows fill their canvas.

There was one storm that, breaking over our family life and into its quiet days, made a great impression on my mind. I write of it after the lapse of many years. My wife had at the time a good trustworthy nurse, and this girl's father was desirous that she should leave service and come home, where a rich suitor awaited her. Between dislike for this individual and love for our children, Annie was reluctant to leave us. She lingered on from week to week, and put off her parent with various excuses. I sometimes wondered whether behind them all there was not a real heartfelt reason for remaining in service. I had seen Annie talking to some young fellow, one of my farm labourers, in the moonlight, when the little ones were asleep, and it was possible that she preferred him to the moneyed man. Some women will not consider life prospects from a sensible point of view. My wife at last told Annie that she must leave us.

"You know that you are wanted at home," she said, "and I have suited myself with another nurse; and I think she is a good girl, although my children do not take a fancy to her."

"I'm going, ma'am, I know I must leave," answered Annie; and a few days after this, without a word, she went.

Shall I ever forget that day? It was a perfect morning, meeting-time between spring and summer. The white syringa blossom strewed the garden path; the great wild roses that had lately been threading their milky way in the hedge, and hung wreathed among high branches where nature's hand had flung them, all had faded, and the country was richer in colouring and less fairylike than it had been in the first bright advent of spring, crowned with her peach-blossom and feathery buds. We went out that morning into the garden to see Annie off, and wish her well. She walked along the path under the shadow of the orange trees, and out into the brilliant sunshine, turned at the gate for a last look at us, and then started into a fast run, having some miles to go before reaching home, and thinking nothing of the baking heat of the sun. So passed away Annie the nurse from our sight.

The new nurse had a terrible time all that day long. Nothing could persuade the children that she had not supplanted Annie wilfully and maliciously. First they scolded the girl, then attacked her with fat little doubled-up fists, and finally "sent her to Coventry," and became deaf and dumb to all matters that concerned her. The mutiny was at its worst, and we were about to meet their naughtiness with strong home-rule measures, when there came a knock at the door. I opened it myself, not being given to much ceremony in those days, and found some boys waiting on the step.

"Sir," said the biggest, "we've come for Annie; father sent us."

"For Annie? Why she left this morning."

"No, sir," said the spokesman, with a startled look.

"But she did, indeed. Your sister left us this morning."

"She never came home; we have come straight from there," answered the boy; and, after saying this, he looked down and raised his eyes no more from the ground.

"Run back, boys, and see if she has not come by now. No doubt she looked in at her friends on the way."

At my words the party ran off, leaving me perplexed at Annie's conduct. I strolled down alone to a favourite haunt of mine, the garden by the river, and overlooked the men at their task. Only one of them laboured on in silence. He was a little way from the others, digging up a piece of ground in preparation for seed sowing. He started at my approach, and answered questions on garden matters very vaguely, and with a far off, unfathomable look in his eyes.

"You are making a crooked thing of that bed, Tom,"

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I said. "Leave it alone, now, and I will come down early in the morning and help you with it."

"Very well, sir," he replied, in the low constrained tone of a person anxious not to lose a word of some interesting conversation; and yet his comrades were merely joking together, and giving each other a word now and then.

"Do you hear thunder? Is rain coming?" I said looking at his anxious face.

"No, there will come no rain for some days," he answered low; and then shouldered his spade, and went with the others to the tool-house. The hill-tops were rosy in the sunshine when I went down to the garden, next morning, and a glorious freshness was in the air. Of the men, Tom was the only one down, and he was waiting for me, line in hand. How strange he looked, standing as quiet and still as the tree near him, yet with yesterday's strange attraction to some invisible thing strong upon him, and with yesterday's expression intensified in his face. It might have been taken as a study of the face of a Sibyl listening absorbed to the words of her oracle.

"Are you ill, Tom?" I inquired, looking closely at him.

"No, sir."

"Then take the string over yonder, and look sharp about it. I want to ride over and see if Annie the nurse has turned up yet."

He looked up at me with a strange wild glance, and then in silence obeyed. We were just finishing the work when he sprang from his knees, and called out in a loud voice:

"There, I knew it! They've found the body."

Then indeed it was my turn to grow pale and look anxious in the ghastly light of a sudden suspicion that flashed across my brain.

"What," I asked, "in Heaven's name do you mean?"

"Do you not hear the death-cry? They've found her—they've found her!"

It slowly, painfully was borne into my mind that I was in the presence of a murderer. I could not doubt it as I looked at Tom, but surely he was no common specimen. There he stood opposite me, not noticing me, careless of danger, and calling upon his victim by all the passionate love-names that could rise to the lips of a broken-hearted man.

As I stood gazing on him in silence, the awful sound of the death-wail, faint and distant, fell on my ear, the sound that Tom's sense of hearing had received with such suspicious acuteness.

"Tom," I faltered, "foul work has been going on, and you have been concerned in it."

"Ay, sir, I killed her," he said aloud, and, as it seemed, defiantly.

"Great Heavens! And you can stand there and so heartlessly confess the crime?"

"There's nought more to do or say. All's done, sir. I killed her. This hand shed her blood. I——"

"Hush, Tom!" I exclaimed hurriedly, for the cheery voices of the other men could now be heard over the hill, and I feared Tom would commit himself before them. After all, he might be innocent, and the cause of his wild words be grief. His manner was very strange. Had sorrow turned his brain, or was he really a criminal? He must be protected from himself until I knew more of the circumstances of the dreadful events, so I hastily sent him away from the garden.

"Take that basket up to my workroom, and wait there for me," I said, raising my voice and speaking as though displeased.

A quarter of an hour later I joined him, and shut the door on our two selves.

"Now, Tom, tell me what all this means, and try and control yourself, and speak the truth," I said.

He stood silent for a while, and then began his tale, and poured into my ears a tragedy of love, jealousy, and passion. Annie had given him reason, as he thought, to believe that she would marry him. He had imagined that she meant to run away from home and the rich suitor provided for her, and marry the man of her choice.

"And so she did intend to do, as I believe; but not—not with me. Yet she was so kind and soft to me, sir, that I cannot tell. Even now, when her body lies deprived of life by this most hateful hand, I cannot answer the question. Did she love me or that other person? She had given me no promise—it hardly seemed that we needed that. To be with her was enough for me; I did not look on to the future."

Tom paused, for a moment his excited mind seemed to forget the horror of the present in the dream of remembered joy.

"Tom," I said gently; and, with a start, he resumed:

"That day she quitted your service, I watched her leave with her little bundle on her head. Singing through the fields she went, and I left my work and ran to join her by the path that would meet hers. I saw her cross the brook, but—not alone. A man had been before me, and had already met her, and the two sat down and stayed a long time on the bank of the brook."

"Strange, and she seemed so anxious to reach home," I muttered.

"Ay, strange, sir; and it seemed so to me. Mad jealousy filled my veins, each moment made me wilder. I flew down upon the two as if I were a tiger, not a man; and he the coward, fled. And she, my innocence, my love, faced me, we had words, and they only fired me more and more. How can I speak of it? Before I left the spot her life-blood dyed the waters of the stream."

The next day Tom went to the magistrate, and gave himself up as Annie's murderer. He was committed to take his trial at the next assizes; but when the time came for the next assizes the prisoner was far away. He died one evening as the sun went down—of love and a broken heart; but then (O shade of Rosalind) this poor lover was not one of this tough and calm-hearted nation—for Tom and his love, Annie the nurse, were Zulus.

K. G.

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No. 7 of

"The Curiosity Shop."

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PEARSON'S WEEKLY

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£100 PRIZE AWARDED EVERY WEEK.

The football matches named below will be played on Saturday, October 27th. To the competitor from whom we receive the correct result of all these matches we will pay the sum of ONE HUNDRED POUNDS. If no competitor gives all the results correctly, the HUNDRED POUNDS will be awarded to the person or persons most nearly correct. In the event of more than one competitor sending in the same result, the prize will be divided.

FOOTBALL COUPON No. 3. Matches to be played on Saturday, October 27th.

MATCHES TO BE PLAYED ON SATURDAY, OCT. 27TH.	Free	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1 BURY v. 2 SUNDERLAND																			
1 NOTTS FOREST v. 2 EVERTON																			
1 STOKE v. 2 SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY																			
1 MANCHESTER CITY v. 2 DERBY COUNTY																			
1 NEW BRIGHTON TOWER v. 2 BURNLEY																			
1 WOOLWICH ARSENAL v. 2 GRIMSBY TOWN																			
1 BLACKPOOL v. 2 SMALL HEATH																			
1 TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR v. 2 WEST HAM UNITED																			
1 READING v. 2 BRISTOL CITY																			
1 QUEEN'S PARK RANG. v. 2 MILLWALL																			

The clubs engaged in each match are numbered 1 and 2. To fill in the above coupon, insert in the space provided the number of the club selected to win. To predict a draw, put X. THE FIRST COUPON IS FREE. A penny stamp must be inclosed for each coupon used in addition to the free one. Nine extra coupons may be used for Sixpence, and eighteen extra coupons for One Shilling.

I send in this coupon as a competitor for the prize advertised in this paper, and subject to the conditions printed on this page:

Name and address.....

THINGS TO REMEMBER.

1. Coupons may be sent either from "Pearson's Weekly," the "Curiosity Shop," or "Short Stories."
2. All coupons must reach us not later than Friday, October 26th, first post.
3. Competitors should cut out the whole coupon, score it as directed, put their name and address in the space provided, and send to "COUPON, No. 3," Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, W.C.
4. All coupons are at senders' risk, and if they go astray, from whatever cause, we do not accept responsibility.
5. Competitors must attach their private address to their attempts. No prize will be sent to any post-office, refreshment rooms, or other places at which letters are called for. Attempts bearing such addresses will be disqualified.
6. In the event of a tie the prize will be divided.
7. It must be taken as a condition of the competition that anybody competing therein agrees to abide by the Editor's final decision.

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NEW SERIES.

THE ADVENTURES OF AN ACTOR.

II.—A Pantomime Side Light.

"STANLEY, are you quite sure you love me?"

"Quite, quite sure. But, Dolly, why are you always asking me that question?"

"Because you men are so unreliable. You think you are in love and are quite honest when you say so, but you wake up one day to find that you only dreamt of love, that it was infatuation."

"But you women are just as bad. You think you're in love when you are not."

"No, a woman loves differently, Stan; man's love is a seed that has to be sown every year, but a woman's love once sown lasts for ever."

"I say, Dolly, you are very hard on us men."

"I try not to be, but it is hard work, Stan. Of course, there are many exceptions."

"And we are going to be exceptions, eh, Dolly?"

"I hope so, dear."

The speakers were Dolly Bainton, from the Gaiety Theatre pantomime, and Stanley Allercroft, a bright fair-haired, fresh faced youth, who had just left college. He was silent for a moment, gazing with smiling eyes down at the picture before him.

A picture indeed was Dolly Bainton, with her soft black curly hair, her pale face, and eyes as black as sloes. She reminded one of a Dresden china figure, she was so beautifully and delicately moulded, so neat and pretty. With him it had been love at first sight. When he first witnessed the pantomime, the moment she appeared before the footlights he had lost his head.

Since then he had been a nightly attendant at the Gaiety Theatre. He had made friends with the comedians, and an introduction to his heart's idol was soon forthcoming. Eight weeks passed and found them engaged.

"But why this learned lecture on man's failing and women's virtues," he asked at length.

"Because I love you so much," she said putting her arms round his neck, "and because I fear to lose you. I want you to be quite sure. I could bear to lose you now perhaps, but I could not later. If you regret, Stanley, I give you back your word."

"Don't talk rot, little one, are we not engaged?" he replied, kissing the emerald ring on her finger. "And to-morrow I am going to take you and introduce you to my mother, but you must not be serious like this, it does not suit you, you must be your old merry self."

"Oh, I'll be merry enough to-morrow, if you like. I'll turn cartwheels on the lawn, if it so please your highness. I had better give your mother a taste of my tom-boy airs, then she will know what to expect in the future."

Stanley laughed, and as Lil, Dolly's friend, who shared her rooms now came in, the conversation changed. They sat down and began to talk excitedly about a prank they were going to play on one of the girls who was overburdened with vanity.

Dolly was a very imp of mischief and dearly loved a practical joke.

The next day found Stanley and Dolly in the train on their way to Beachampton, a pretty house in the country, where Mrs. Allercroft lived.

The first sight that caught Mrs. Allercroft's gaze, as she stood at the window, expecting them, was Stanley and Dolly having a race up the drive. She clasped her hands in horror, and looked nervously round to see if any of her guests were looking on.

Her greeting to Dolly was very pleasant and quiet. She hoped she would spend a pleasant day with them.

"Oh, you bet," said Dolly with candour. "Whenever I go out I always make up my mind to have a high old time, don't I, Stan?"

"I am afraid you will find us rather quiet here."

"Not a bit! I should soon wake you up if I were here long."

Stanley looked on and smiled, he admired her easy ways and sometimes alarming directness.

Dolly found everything delightful in the old house, from the late Captain Allercroft's room of war trophies to the family portraits and the cases of old china. The big St. Bernard, Carlo, was soon a great friend of hers, as was its owner, Colonel Baker, Mrs. Allercroft's brother. At dinner she kept the men amused and the ladies shocked, by tales of professional life.

"It seems a terribly depraved life," said one old spinster,

**Who the—? What the—? If you please, sir,
What d'ye mean by TWENTY TEAZER?**

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who had been bottled up and on the shelf for many a year, "I really think I would rather be a gipsy or a common tramp."

This annoyed Dolly, and, without thinking, she said:

"Rats, we call a spade a spade, and as long as people are good-hearted and true we mix with them, and are friends as long as they want us to be."

"Perhaps you *prefer* to associate with bad people," said the old lady, ruffled and letting her temper get the best of her.

"No, but I prefer honesty to hypocrisy," said Dolly with indignation. "It's tommy rot to talk like that."

Dolly's expressions caused consternation among the ladies, and Mrs. Allercroft tried to smooth matters, by saying:

"But of course you will leave the stage now?"

"Never," replied Dolly. "I wouldn't leave it for a hundred men. I should feel like a lark with its wings clipped."

"But, my dear child, I cannot allow you to remain on the stage when you marry my son."

"Oh, you will soon get used to it, and he does not mind. Do you, Stan?"

Stanley, with some hesitation, said he did not.

Just then the big St. Bernard dog pushed his heavy head against Dolly's arm and her knife fell clattering to the ground.

"Confound it," she said on the impulse of the moment, and seeing her mistake, blushed and added, "oh, I beg pardon."

The look of horror on the ladies' faces amused her so much that she had to cram her handkerchief into her mouth to keep from laughing.

It was always a joke against Dolly that a glass of wine loosened her tongue, and she had had two. She told them all about the pantomine's last big supper and the funny speech made by the principal comedian, when he was half seas over.

"What did you say he was?" asked a dame.

"Squiffy," said Dolly.

"And what may that be?"

"Now no 'hank.' You know."

"Indeed I do not."

"Well, tipsy, in plain English."

"Oh, how horrible."

"Oh, that was nothing to what they were at three in the morning."

"My dear child," said Mrs. Allercroft, "you don't mean to say that you stayed out till three in the morning."

"Stanley was there, and I daresay all of you have gone home later from a ball, many a time in your lives."

Shock upon shock Mrs. Allercroft experienced during dinner—she was glad when the meal was over.

In the afternoon Dolly came rushing up to Stanley with her hat on.

"Colonel Baker is going to show me the greenhouse, won't you come?"

"I will directly, only mother wishes to speak to me, you go on, I will join you. I say, Dolly!"

"Yes, dear."

"Why did you tell them so much at dinner?"

"Why there was no harm in it, was there?"

"No, only I wish you hadn't."

"Doesn't your mother know how we live? Haven't you told her what our life is?"

"You see, Dolly, mother does not understand things as we do."

"Well it's never too late to learn. You know I can't sail under a false flag, Stan. There cheer up, solemn face, you look as if you had swallowed half-a-crown. Meet you on the Rialto. Don't be long," and so saying she flew off.

"I say, Colonel Baker, were you very shocked at what I said at dinner?"

"No, I enjoyed your prattle immensely."

"No, I mean the swear word."

"Um, it did come into our midst a bit like a cannon ball," said the Colonel laughing again at the memory of it.

"It was funny to see their faces, wasn't it? You know I don't think there is any more harm in saying 'confound it,' than in saying 'bother,' they both mean the same thing, and you bet they've all said it some time in their lives."

"That's not the point, little one, the sin is saying it in public."

"Can't see the difference myself."

"But those old ladies cannot understand your open-mindedness."

"You don't think any the worse of me for it, do you?"

"Not a bit, my child, you are a fresh little flower I have not met for many a long day."

After their visit to the greenhouse, Dolly lured the stately old Colonel on to a game of "hide and seek." Under her bright influence he was like a big schoolboy. Carlo was used as a bloodhound to track the fugitive down. It was Dolly's turn to hide.

I will puzzle them now, she thought, as she slipped into the conservatory and hid behind the door. The sound of voices reached her, but she was looking intently through the glass panes watching the Colonel and Carlo hunt round the shrubs for her, and did not pay heed to them until she heard her own name mentioned.

"Youth and high spirits are no excuse, my son, for insulting my old friend, Miss Mitchell, shocking us all at table, and swearing like a common street girl," Mrs. Allercroft was saying.

"Mother, this is too much, you shall not speak of her like this. You don't understand her."

"No, Stanley, I don't want to if this is the way she behaves, and I never shall. Stanley, I am an old woman and know many things you do not, I ask you, can I invite our friends to meet her here to be outraged and insulted."

"Mother, you speak too strongly."

"No, my boy, I do not. On this I am determined; you choose between me and Miss Bainton."

"Mother, you don't know what you are saying," said Stanley now angry and thoroughly roused.

"Yes, Stanley, I do. Oh, my boy, I am only thinking of you and your happiness. You are young and youthful eyes cannot see that this woman has plotted to secure you. It is a fine thing, indeed, for a girl of no family to marry you, wealthy and well-connected. My boy, if you do this you will break my heart. Does this girl, whom you have only known for eight weeks, drive me for ever from you? Stanley, you must choose between us. Is it she or I?"

"Mother, you are cruel and unjust, I cannot and will not give her up."

"Is that your final answer?" asked Mrs. Allercroft sobbing.

**Some smart joke or witty wheeze—or
Hangs around this TWENTY TEAZER.**

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"My final answer."

Stanley left the room, banging the door as he went, leaving his mother weeping bitterly. Dolly stood like one stunned. She had not wanted to hear their conversation, but the horror of it had rooted her to the spot. Half dazed, she crept out of the conservatory and made her way to the summer house, her face pale and drawn and her heart full of pain. When the Colonel and Carlo found her there he was surprised to see big tears rolling down her face.

"Found you at last, you little imp. Why, my dear child, what is the matter, have you hurt yourself?"

Dolly tried hard to brush away her tears and be cheerful, but miserably failed. She burst into sobs, and laying her head on the good old Colonel's shoulder clung to him, and poured out her piteous tale.

"Am I such a very wicked woman?" she asked, when he had to a certain extent pacified her.

"No, no, my child," said the old fellow, nearly crying himself. "My sister is perfectly ignorant of the world, she has lived in a narrow groove, overawed by the Church and Clergy all her life. She has very wrongfully misjudged you, but she shall not continue to do so, I promise you. I will bring my influence to bear upon her."

"No, Colonel, don't do anything please. I will give Stanley his promise back and never trouble her again."

"Now, my child, you must not do anything rash."

"Please don't try and persuade me for my mind is made up. You must not ask me to part mother and son."

When she left that evening she put up her face to be kissed by the Colonel, and whispered:

"It is good-bye."

He protested vehemently, and said he would bring everything right, but she shook her head sadly, and in a minute they had disappeared down the drive.

Lil was out when they arrived at her rooms, so Dolly said at once:

"Stanley, your mother does not like me."

"Nonsense, Dolly, whatever——"

"Now, you know you cannot look into my eyes and tell me she does. Stanley, I ask you for the truth, and only the truth."

Stanley hesitated for a moment, and then said very quietly and sadly:

"No, she does not."

"Then, dear, we must say good-bye."

"Dolly, what are you——"

"Hush! You are her only child, are you not?"

"Yes."

"I cannot part a mother and son."

"It would not be that."

"Yes, it would, Stanley. Your mother is a resolute woman."

But Stanley would not hear of their parting he vowed and declared he would bring his mother round and that all would be well.

A fortnight passed since the date of these events. It was the last night of the pantomine. Dolly was jubilant for Stanley was sure to come down to-night. Since that evening he had brought her from his home he had been up in London, passing his examinations, and had been too busy to write her more than a couple of short notes the whole time.

Dolly was sitting in her dressing-room, waiting for the overture to finish, when Lil rushed in with a letter. "Here, Doll, here's a 'billy duck's' for 'oo," and was gone again like a flash of light.

The letter was a long one from Stanley and led gradually up to these lines:

"Of all the e things I have been thinking and I fear we cannot hope for happiness with so much against us. I remember some words of yours the day before I took you to Beachampton. You said, 'You men honestly think you love when you say so, but wake up to find you dreamt it, that it was only infatuation.' Dare I tell you I have dreamed and am now awake. You gave me back my promise, do you still do so? Don't you think it will be for the best that——"

Dolly could read no more, the words ran into each other, the room swam round her, and with a moan she fell senseless to the ground. What irony is in the fact that at this moment Stanley was hurrying to the station. He had just left the post office where he had been sending off a wire which ran thus: "Forgive my letter. I did not mean it. I was driven to it. Will arrive at Theatre 9.15 p.m."

When Dolly opened her eyes she saw Lil bending tenderly over her bathing her face.

"It's nothing, dear," she answered to Lil's anxious questions. "Don't be frightened, it is one of my old heart attacks. Only weakness, and I must be strong, strong."

As Dolly went on the stage with a bound a mighty cheer arose from the house and it was long before she could utter a sound. Everyone vowed there was no merrier, brighter figure in the pantomime that night than Dolly Bainton. Everything was excitement and Lil rushed about like a madcap. She had flashed into Dolly's room with a telegram, but Dolly was not there and the excited Lil soon covered that wealth of heartease with bouquets of lilies and passion flowers, fairer flowers, perhaps, but bearing no balm to a wounded heart.

It was nearly ten o'clock when Dolly went on to sing the choicest item of the evening, her pretty "coon" song. Only one verse had she sung when her eyes caught sight of a pale face up in the dress circle.

Could it be true? Was she dreaming? She caught her breath painfully, and clutched her heart, in which it seemed a cold knife had entered. Everything went black, the lights of the house and the sea of heads went out, only one pale face could she see staring down at her with frightened eyes.

The double shock proved too much, and with a loud cry she fell forward on her face. Women screamed, the music stopped, the curtain was lowered and she was carried into the green-room where everyone crowded round her.

They made way for the doctor, who was luckily in the theatre. He shook his head when he examined her, and said:

"Failure of the heart, I fear there is no hope. You tell me she was subject to these attacks."

They made way again when Stanley came rushing in with a horror-stricken face.

"Dolly, Dolly, my love, speak to me, speak to me," he cried frantically, taking her in his arms.

The doctor laid his hand on Stanley's shoulder, and said gently:

"She will never speak again, her lips are sealed for ever."

DOUGLAS VIGORS.

[Next Week: "AT THE NAG'S HEAD."]

Great Scott! Likewise Julius Cæsar!
Who the dickens is TWENTY TEAZER?

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HOW SNOOKS GOT OUT OF IT.

"If you will take my advice," said Mr. Wilding, making a last noble but futile effort to balance the ivory paper-knife on the tip of his first finger, "you won't go to the Brownrigs' ball."

"And why not?" asked his companion irritably.

"Well, I really wouldn't, you know," said Mr. Wilding, giving up his struggle with the impossible and laying the refractory paper-knife upon the table, "for a variety of reasons. Girls play the very mischief with you, and you know what trouble it gave me to get you out of your last scrape. There are four Brownrig girls, aren't there? And they are all pretty?"

"I don't see what that's got to do with it," said Snooks sulkily. "There's safety in a multitude. I can't marry them all, can I?"

"Happily, no! Though, if the laws of your land did not forbid it, I am inclined to think you might try to accomplish even that. Still, be advised, Snooks, and be conspicuous by your absence at the Brownrigs' 'small and early.' Papa Brownrig, when incensed is not nice, and you know you are decidedly smitten with Miss Katie."

"No, I am not," said Snooks, with decision. "Not a bit of it! Though, I allow she is a handsome girl, and has lovely eyes. Hasn't she, now?"

"I don't know. As a rule I never look into a woman's eyes. I consider it a rudeness as well as stupidity," said Wilding earnestly, telling his lie without a blush. "Never mind her eyes. If," warningly, "you must go to this ball, at least try to forget she has eyes at all. If you don't, you will propose to her, to a moral."

"One would think I was a raw schoolboy," said young Snooks wrathfully. "Do you think I can't look at a woman without committing myself? Do I look like a fool?"

Whatever Mr. Wilding thought at that moment, he kept it to himself. Before he spoke next, he and his conscience had agreed to dissemble.

"My dear fellow, do not let us even hint at such a thing," he said amiably. "I only meant you were slightly—very slightly—susceptible, and that Miss Katie has a certain amount of pleasing power, and that I positively would give up this ball if I——"

"Are you going?" broke in Snooks impatiently.

"Well yes, I daresay I shall look in about twelve."

"Fact is, the fellow wants to spoon her himself, and don't see the force of being cut out," said he to himself, complacently, as he ran down the steps of Wilding's stairs.

Beyond all question the Brownrigs' ball was a decided success. The rooms were filled to overflowing, the staircases were choked, the heat was intolerable. Sir Thomas and Lady Higgins had actually put in an appearance after all, and the supper, if uneatable, was, I assure you, very expensive. No pains or money had been spared; everything was what the mistress of the house called "rug regal;" and all the Miss Brownrigs looked as charming as any one could desire.

There were four of them. There was Katie, the second daughter—Snooks' friend, and the possessor of the lovely eyes. And they were lovely, large, and dark, and true and tender, like the North, according to the Laureate! "black as sloes," said her fond if slightly oppressive mother, and of the languid melting order.

Then there was Hetty, the eldest girl, who, if her eyes were not so dark as midnight, had at least the dearest little nose in the world. A pure Greek feature, perfect in every respect, ignorant of colds in the head, that made one long to tell her (only she would have blushed, they were all nicely brought up) about Dudu, and her Phidian appendage.

Then came Georgie—"George the third," as she was playfully termed in the bosom of her family—who, if she had neither nose nor eyes like her sisters, had certainly a prettier mouth than either. A sweet little kissable mouth, that pouted and laughed alternately, and did considerable execution.

And finally there was Lily. A tall pale girl, with blue eyes, a finely cut chin, and a good deal of determination all round.

Katie's eyes were larger, darker, and (when she looked at Snooks and thought of his thousands) more melting than ever that night. Her dress, if slightly *bizarre*, was intensely becoming.

Snooks, for the first half hour, kept himself bravely aloof from her fascinations, declined to notice her reproachful glances and languishing oglings for reward, and was wretched.

Finally being driven into a corner during a fatal set of Lancers, he met her eyes, saw and was conquered. She would dance the next with him? Yes (coldly). And the next? Yes (more gently). And the ninth—he can see she is disengaged for it? Yes (this time quite warmly).

An hour later the deed was done. Some capital champagne, a dark avenue (I believe there were some Chinese lanterns there originally, but a kind wind had blown them out), and a soft little hand slipped into his, did the work; and Miss Katie had promised bashfully, but with unmistakable willingness, to be the future Mrs. Snooks. Whether it was Snooks or the property pertaining to Snooks she most affected, deponent sayeth not.

When, however, her betrothed found what he had done, and remembered his former words, and all the awfulness of parental wrath, his heart failed him. He went, as he usually did when in sorry case, in search of Wilding; and having discovered him, took him into a side-room, and shutting the door confronted him with a rather pale face.

"Those eyes were too many for you," said Mr. Wilding calmly, after a deliberate examination of the disturbed face before him. "I told you how it would be."

"That's the sort of thing any fellow might say," returned Snooks pathetically. "I didn't think you would have been so aggravating. And just when you see I'm down on my luck too. Yes; I've been and gone and done it."

"'Mother will be pleased!'" quoted his friend and

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law adviser, with a shrug. "So, by-the-bye, will be your father. They both regard nothing so highly as birth. I suppose Miss Brownrig can lay claim to some decent breeding?"

"The old chap is a cornchandler, you know that; at least, he used to be," said Snooks, with a heavy groan.

"Oh, indeed! And a very charming business too, I have no doubt. Leads up to quite a train of ideas. Corn wheat, staff of life, quaint old mill, and rustic bridge in the distance; miller sitting on it. I wonder," dreamily, "if Brownrig ever wore a white hat? And if so—why? Don't all speak at once. Well, well, she is a very pretty girl. Such eyes, you know! I really congratulate you my dear fellow."

"Wilding," desperately, "can't you do something? I—I don't know how it happened. It was the champagne, I suppose, and of course you know she is pretty: but I don't want to marry anyone, and I know the governor wouldn't hear of it."

"He will have to hear of it now, won't he?" asked Wilding unfeelingly.

"He would go out of his mind if such a thing were even hinted to him," declared Snooks wildly. "Try to help me out of it, Wilding, can't you?"

"I don't see what there is to do, except marry her, I only hope Lady Snooks and Miss Cornchandler will get on. And you should think of her beauty, you know; doubtless it will console you when Sir Peter cuts you off with the customary shilling."

"I suppose I had better cut my throat and put an end to it," said Snooks dismally, and then—overcome, no doubt, by the melancholy of this suggestion—he breaks down and gives way to tears.

"I say, don't do that you know," exclaimed Wilding indignantly. "Weeping all over the place won't improve matters, and will only make you look a worse fool than Nature intended, when you go out of the room. If you have put your foot in it, at least bear misfortune like a man. Look here," angrily, "if you are going to keep up this hideous boohooing I'll leave the room, and you too, to your fate. It's downright indecent. They will hear you in the next house if you don't moderate your grief."

As the nearest house was a quarter of a mile off, this was severe.

"I shouldn't care if they heard me in the next town," said Mr. Snooks, who was quite too far gone for shame.

"There is just one chance for you, and only one," said Wilding slowly. "I have an idea, and you must either follow it, or—go to the altar."

"I'll follow anything," eagerly. "What is it?"

"You have proposed to Miss Katie," solemnly. "Now go, and *propose to the other three!*"

As Wilding gave vent to his idea he turned abruptly on his heel and left the room.

"I'll do it," said Snooks valiantly, drying his eyes and giving his breast a tragic tap, "whatever comes of it."

Going into the hall, he saw Hetty standing near an entrance; a little way beyond her was Katie, conversing with a tall and lanky youth. Not daring to glance in the direction of the latter, who plainly expected him to come straight to her on the wings of love, he turned and asked Hetty to dance.

They danced, and then (it was a custom with the ball-goers in that mild suburban neighbourhood) he drew her out under the gleaming stars and up the dark avenue that a few minutes since was the scene of her sister's happiness.

There he proposed in due form, and was again accepted. Hetty's conduct, indeed, was a degree more pronounced than Katie's, because she laid her head on his shoulder, and he felt he was by all the laws of sentiment bound to kiss her. Her nose looked lovely in the pale moonlight; so I daresay he did not find the fulfilling of this law difficult.

After that he had some more, a good deal more—champagne; and then he proposed to Miss Georgie, who also consented to be his.

There now remained but one other step to be taken. He crossed the room, and asked the youngest Miss Brownrig to dance. He was getting rather mixed by this time, and was on the very point of asking her to marry him instead, so customary had the question grown to him now.

Miss Lily, however, declined to dance, on the plea that she was tired, and could exert herself no more that night.

With questionable taste he pressed the matter, and begged her to give him one, just one. At this she told him frankly she did not admire his style of dancing, which ended the conversation. So he asked her to come for a stroll instead; and having arrived at the momentous spot, delivered himself of the ornate speech that had already done duty three times that night. I forget what it was, but I know it wound up with the declaration that he adored her and wanted to marry her.

"It's extremely good of you, I'm sure," said the youngest Miss Brownrig calmly. "But, uncivil as I fear it must sound, I don't want to marry you."

"Don't you, by Jove!" said Snooks hastily. "Well, that's awfully ki— No, no!" pulling himself up with a start; "I don't mean that, you know; I mean it's awfully horrid, you know. In fact," warming to his work through sheer gratitude, "you have made me miserable for ever; you've broken my heart."

"Dear me, how shocking!" said Miss Lily frivolously. "Let us hope Time will mend it. I'm not very sure you did not speak the truth at first. I really believe it is kind, my refusing you. And now, Mr. Snooks, if I were you I should go in and say good-night to mamma, because you have been having a good deal of papa's champagne, and it is trying to the constitution."

Snooks took the hint, bade farewell to Mrs. Brownrig who, to his heated imagination, appeared to regard him with a moist and motherly eye, and, taking Wilding's arm drew him out of the house.

"Well?" said the latter interrogatively.

"I don't know whether it is well or ill," returned he gloomily. "But I followed your advice, and proposed to them all."

"And they accepted you?"

"The most of 'em. But Lily, the youngest, she——"

"I always said she was a sensible girl," put in Mr. Wilding *sotto voce*.

"Did you?" with much surprise. "Well, she refused me; sort of said she wouldn't have me at any price. So you see you were wrong!"

"I always knew she was one of the most intelligent girls I ever met," Mr. Wilding repeated, in a tone so difficult that his companion for once had sufficient sense to refrain from demanding an explanation.

**Halt! Attention! Stand at ease, sir,
Make way, please, for TWENTY TEAZER.**

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The next morning, as Katie Brownrig turned the angle of the hall that led to her father's sanctum (whither a sense of filial duty beckoned her) she almost ran into the arms of her three sisters, all converging towards the same spot from different directions.

Simultaneously they entered Mr. Brownrig's study. (He called it a library; but that word is too often profaned for me to use it, so I shall draw the line at study.) But to return. Miss Lily, being the youngest, was of course the first to raise her voice.

"I had a proposal last night, papa, and I have come to tell you about it," she said, in a tone replete with triumph.

It is so sweet to the mind of youth to outdo its elders. But, "on this occasion only," the elders refused to be outdone. They each and all betrayed a smile of inward satisfaction, and then they gave way to speech.

"No!" they said, in a breath. They did not mean to doubt or be impolite; they only meant surprise.

"The curate," said Hetty in a composed but plainly contemptuous whisper. It was a stage whisper.

"Old Major Sterne," said Miss Georgie, promptly.

"Perhaps Henry Simms," suggested Katie, with some sympathy.

Then turning to her father she said, with a conscious blush. "It is very strange but I too had a proposal last night."

"And so had I!" exclaimed Georgie and Hetty in a breath.

"Eh?" said papa, pushing up his spectacles. He was fat and podgy, with sandy hair and a flabby nose.

He was a powerful man too, and one unpleasant to come to open quarrel with.

Proposals in the Brownrig family were few and far between—in fact, curiosities—and so much luck, as the girls described, falling into one day overpowered him.

"One at a time, my breath is not what it used to be," he said, addressing Katie. (If he had said breadth, it would have been equally true, as his mother—if she was to be believed—always declared he was a lean baby.) "May I ask the name of your lover?"

"Mr. Snooks," said she, with downcast eyes and a timid smile.

She took up the corner of a cherry-coloured bow that adorned her gown, and fell to admiring it, through what she fondly believed was bashfulness.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Georgie angrily.

"What a disgraceful untruth!" cried Hetty rudely. "Mr Snooks proposed to me, to me, last night, and I accepted him."

"What is it you say? Oh, I am going out of my mind; my senses are deserting me," said Georgie, putting her hands to her head with a dramatic gesture. "Or is it a dream that he asked me to marry him, and that I too said 'yes.'"

"I seldom visit the clouds," said Lily, with a short but bitter laugh. "And I certainly know he made me a noble offer of his hand and heart; both which treasures I declined."

"Where?" demanded the other three, as though with one mouth.

"In the laurel avenue!"

At this they all groaned aloud.

"Perfidious monster!" said Hetty from her heart.

"Am I to understand," began Mr. Brownrig, with suppressed but evident fury, "that this—this—unmitigated scoundrel asked you all to marry him last night?"

"If we speak the truth, yes," replied the girls dismally.

"He was drunk," said papa savagely.

"I can't believe it," said Katie, who was dissolved in tears—in fact, 'like Niobe, all tears'—by this time. "Nothing could be nicer than the way he did it. His language was perfect and so thoroughly from the—heart."

"He addressed me in a most honourable, upright, and Christian fashion," said Hetty. "I am sure he meant every word he said."

She was thinking uneasily of that kiss in the moonlight.

Could any one have seen her? Was old Major Sterne anywhere about at the moment?

"I certainly considered his manner strange, not a bit like what one reads," said Georgie honestly; "but I thought of the title and the property, and I said yes directly."

"I thought him the greatest muff I ever spoke to," broke in Miss Lily, with decision. "I refused him without a moment's hesitation, and told him to go home. I'm sure it was well I did. I dar say if he had stayed here much longer, he would have proposed to mamma next, and afterwards to the upper housemaid. I agree with you, papa, the champagne was too much for him."

"I—I think he is fond of me," said Katie in a low and trembling tone.

Her fingers are not playing with the cherry coloured bow now, but her eyelids have borrowed largely of its tint.

"Don't be a goose, Katie," said the youngest Miss Brownrig kindly but scornfully; "you don't suppose any of us would marry him now, after the way he has behaved. Do have some little pride."

"Perhaps he is mad," said Hetty vaguely.

Just at this moment as a salve to her wounded vanity, she would have been glad to believe him so.

"No, my dear," declared Lily calmly, "he has no brains worth turning."

"He said something, papa, about calling to-day at four o'clock," said Katie very faintly.

"Then I shall sit here till four," returned Mr. Brownrig in an awful tone. "I shall sit here until five; and then I shall get up, and go out and find that young man, and give him such a horse-whipping as I warrant you he never got before in all his life."

"Don't be too hard on him, papa," intreated Katie.

"I shan't, my dear, but my whip will," said papa grimly.

* * * * *

So he waited until five; he waited till half-past five; and then he took up a certain heavy gold-knobbed whip that lay stretched on the table as though in readiness, and sallied forth in search of Snooks' rooms. And he found them, and Snooks too—in bed, suffering from a severe catarrh, caught, I presume, in the laurel avenue.

And no man knows what he did to Snooks. But at least it gave him an increased desire for his bed, because for a fortnight afterwards he never stirred out of it.

* * * * *

When Mr. Wilding heard of all this, I regret to say he gave way to noisy mirth in the privacy of his chambers; and was actually caught by his waterwoman—who peeped through the keyhole—performing a wild dance in the middle of the floor.

MRS. HUNGERFORD.

What oh, she bumps! Well, why not seize her?
It's good—you bet—this TWENTY TEAZER.

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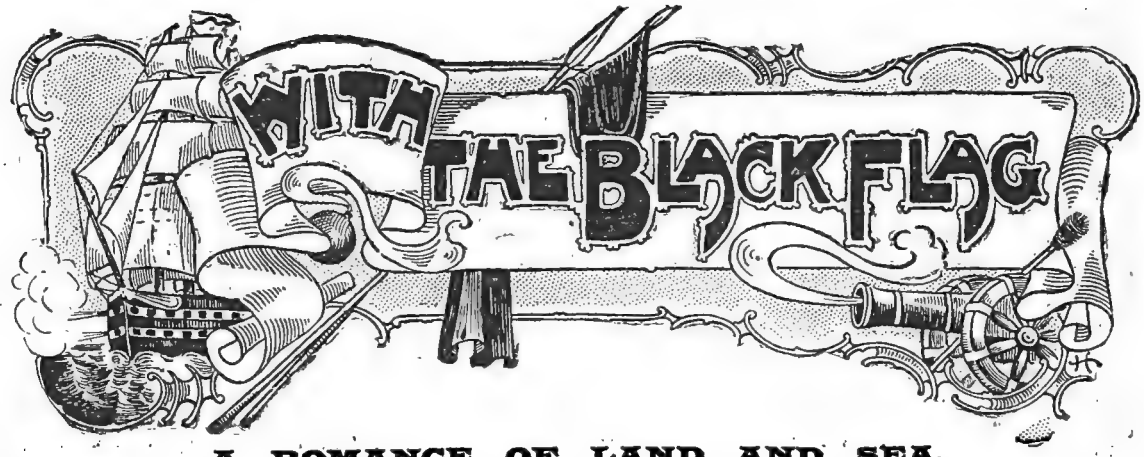

A ROMANCE OF LAND AND SEA.

By William Westall.

Author of "With the Red Eagle," "The Phantom City," "Nigel Fortescue," etc., etc.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS.

Major Wyvenhoe, commander of an expedition which went out from England to help the Venezuelans in their struggle for liberty.

Captain Cautley, who is in charge of the ship which took the expedition out.

John Ready, the servant of Wyvenhoe.

General Arismendez, ex-Governor of Pampatar and Vice-President of the Venezuelan Republic.

Don Iago Santleo, and Antonio Bonanza, two Venezuelans who are friends of Wyvenhoe.

General Urdenetta, Governor of Pampatar, a bitter enemy of Wyvenhoe.

Bolivar, Supreme Chief of the Venezuelan Republic.

Tamanac, an Indian Cazique, and great friend of Santleo.

CHAPTER XVIII.

I am Imprisoned, but Escape.

As I saluted General Urdenetta he gave me a stare of insolent inquiry.

"Excuse me for interrupting you, Señor General; but I have just received this," I said, producing the letter.

"I meant you to receive it, and I mean the order to be obeyed," he answered harshly and peremptorily, but as (though I suspected my fate to be sealed) I had resolved not to throw away a chance by unnecessarily provoking him, I replied quietly:

"But do you mean that I must personally command the firing party?"

"Of course I do. Why not?"

"It is unusual for the colonel of a regiment to command a firing party."

"Unusual it may be, yet not against regulations, and I think I heard somebody say not long ago that when his general gives an order it is an officer's duty to obey it without making remarks."

"If it be a possible order, certainly."

"I do not understand you, Señor Colonel."

"These prisoners are civilians, some old and infirm, others mere boys, and being neither an assassin nor an executioner it is impossible for me to take any part in putting them to death."

"I call you to witness, gentlemen, (turning to his aides) that Colonel Wyvenhoe not only refuses to obey my order, but says I am a murderer."

"Pardon me, Señor General, I did not say what you are, I merely said what I am not."

"But if I have these treacherous peasants executed, you will regard me as a murderer."

"I have not said so; but if I commanded the firing party I should unquestionably regard myself as one."

"So you absolutely refuse to obey my order?"

"Si, señor. I absolutely refuse to imbrue my hands in the blood of these poor people, who, so far as I know, are innocent of offence."

"*Cuerpo de Dios!* Innocent of offence! Are they not sympathisers with the Godos? Their young men, after firing on my troops, have fled, and as I cannot lay my hands on them I shall make an example of their relatives. Nothing you can do will make the slightest difference in my resolve or their fate. Do you still persist in your refusal? I ask for the last time."

"I still persist in my refusal."

"Then you must take the consequences. Consider yourself under arrest."

"As you please. At my quarters?"

"No, sir; here. I shall have you tried by court-martial on a charge of rank insubordination, and insulting your general by imputing to him an intention to commit murder."

A fierce reply rose to my lips; but remembering that he might have me executed instanter, and being disposed to live as long as I might, I said again, "As you please, sir," and remained standing until Captain Comacho, one of the aides who, as I could see, was disgusted with Urdenetta's brutality, invited me to sit down, and gave me a cigar, which I accepted with a "Gracis, Señor Capitan," and a smile of affected unconcern.

Meantime the general convoked a court-martial before which I was shortly arraigned. The provost-martial prosecuted and the witnesses against me were the general and the members of his staff who had been present at the interview. As I could not deny their statements I asked them no questions and clenched the matter by repeating my resolve not to obey the order.

How doth the little busy bee, sir?
That's nought to do with TWENTY TEAZER.

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On the other hand, I made an energetic defence, protesting that there was no law whereby a foreign officer who had merely undertaken to serve the Republic in a military capacity could be required to act as an executioner, also that the order was not only illegal, but outrageous.

To which the president answered that my observations, being insulting alike to the country and the general, aggravated my offence, and after a few minutes consideration, the court found me guilty and passed sentence of death, which Urdenetta at once confirmed.

"You have brought this on yourself," he said in my ear with a smile of malicious triumph. "I offered you my friendship, but you preferred my enmity. You know now that I am not to be insulted and defied with impunity. But to show you that I can be magnanimous, I will let you live until we leave this place, which will be at three o'clock to-morrow morning. Is there a carcel (dungeon) here (to one of the officers)?"

"Si, Señor General, a small one."

"The smaller the better, provided it is strong enough to hold the prisoner. Take him there, give him something to lie on. See that he is well guarded, there must be two sentries, one to stand by the door, the other to patrol the building, both to be relieved every two hours; and nobody must be admitted to the prisoner without a written order signed by myself. See to this, Captain Comacho."

And then he turned away and I was escorted by a corporal and four of Urdenetta's guard to the carcel—a little single-roomed building with thick walls and a thatched roof; a dark, filthy hole, swarming with cockroaches and other abominations, which had evidently not been occupied for a long time. Comacho, a good fellow, who made no secret of his sympathy, and promised to tell Don Iago what had happened, had the place cleaned out; and it was well he did, for under a pile of rubbish in one corner a couple of rattlesnakes were found and promptly killed. Then, after seeing that I was provided with a cobija, a chair, and a pitcher of water, and giving me a bundle of cigars, he left me to myself.

Time dragged with me.

How other people feel when they are cast into prison I don't know. My first impulse was to consider whether it would be possible to get out. Windows there were none, only three round holes, through which, albeit I might get my head, I could not possibly get my shoulders, and, as I have said, the walls were thick.

There remained only the door, which, though originally strong, was considerably decayed, and the hinges were deeply pitted with rust. If it had opened from the inside instead of the outside, and there had been no sentries, I might have tried to force it—of course, after dark; but the sentries were there, the door did not open from the inside, and I soon came to the conclusion that escaping by my own unaided efforts was impossible.

I knew that Santleo, John Ready and the Cazique would leave no stone unturned to help me, but how they could do so was not obvious. It were useless to appeal to Urdenetta, and as nobody could see me without his written permission, which neither Don Iago nor John Ready was likely to obtain, they would be unable to communicate with me. This, however, was of less importance as I saw no way, even if I got out, of evading my guards and running the gauntlet of the pickets and outposts.

There seemed to be nothing for it but resigning myself to my fate—if I could. To be killed in action is the fortune of war; and when I entered the Venezuelan service I took the risk of being captured and executed by the enemy. But being butchered by a Venezuelan general for refusing to murder civilian peasants was a chance which I had not taken into account, and a fate to which I found it hard to reconcile myself. My predominant feeling was of rage against Urdenetta, and I almost hoped that Don Iago would execute his threat of making an end of him—if he could do so without making an end of himself, which was not likely.

I have heard say that, for the victim, the time between the sentence of death and its execution passes on the wings of swiftness, that the seconds become minutes, the minutes hours. I did not find it so. Time dragged with me. My mind was in a turmoil, for albeit my courage did not fail me, I recoiled from the death to which I had been so wickedly doomed. Moreover, I had not quite succeeded in giving up hope, and the resulting suspense was so maddening that there were moments when I regretted not having provoked Urdenetta into ordering my immediate execution.

My musings were interrupted by a fusillade, followed by piercing shrieks, the wailings of women and the moans of wounded men.

Three more shots, and silence.

Urdenetta's infamous order had been executed and more than twenty boys and old men, some on crutches, one blind, put to death.

I stamped and swore in impotent rage. If the murderer had been within reach of my arm he had died. But I could do nothing, and overcome with horror and the sense of my own helplessness, I threw myself on the cobija and covered my face with my hands.

Night fell. It was six o'clock, and there were left to me only nine hours of life. I should never see the sun, never see dear old England again, for at length I had abandoned hope and made up my mind to the worst,

**In padded cell! Ha! Ha! You see, sir!
What you've done with your TWENTY TEAZER.**

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resolving to die bravely as became a christian and a soldier.

I was in this mood when the door opened and one whose features I could not distinguish entered the carcel, carrying in one hand a lantern, in the other a basket.

"The Señor Colonel's supper," announced the sentry, then shut the door.

"Your supper and something else, sir," said the man in English.

"John Ready! Thank Heaven!" I exclaimed, springing to my feet. "The man of all others I wanted to see before I die. But I want no supper, what have you brought me else, John?"

"Hope, and these."

And with that he took from under his jacket a double-barrelled pistol and one of those long two edged Spanish knives, known as *cuchillos cachiblancos*.

"This may be useful," I said, "but a crowbar had been more to the purpose."

"None could be got without exciting suspicion, and, while those two fellows are there, forcing the door from within is out of the question. What sort of door is it?"

"The wood is rotten and the hinges rusty. You and another might force it in with a push of your feet or a thrust of your shoulders."

"Good! That is what we thought."

"You have a plan, then?"

"We have thought of two. One is to burst the door in after disposing of the sentries."

"By killing them?"

"No, by stunning them with the butt ends of our pistols. But unless they were both struck down together, which in the dark might be difficult, there would be cries and a struggle, and smashing the door would make too much noise. Don Iago thinks the other plan is more likely to succeed."

"And that is?"

"To wait till all is quiet, then stampede the commissariat cattle, which are corded at this end of the village, cut the tethers of some of the horses, fire a musket and sing out 'the Godos, the Godos,' which would make the dickens of a row, the fall in would be sounded, and we should profit by the confusion to let you out and slip away."

"Don Iago is right. That is the more hopeful plan. But how will you manage to loose the cattle and cut the tethers?"

"I can do that easy enough, it is only a few slashes with a sharp knife and the Cazique and his dog will answer for the cattle, he can crawl like a snake and make no more noise, and the night is dark."

"How about the sentries?"

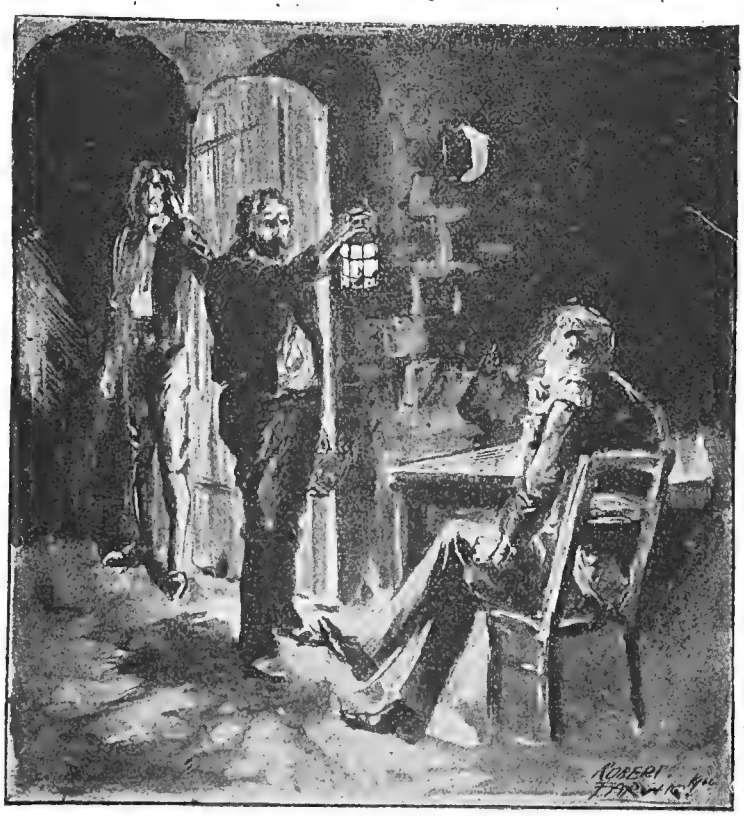
"Don Iago will order them to leave their posts and fall in with the others. If they refuse they must take the consequences."

"But won't that be bad for Don Iago afterwards?"

"He is going with us."

"Going with us?"

"Yes, he and the Cazique. Don Iago says there is nothing to choose between the patriots and the Spaniards, and that he won't serve under such a murderous ruffian as Urdenetta another day. But I must not stay any longer, sir, or the sentries will be smelling a rat. Only be sure to keep awake, and when you hear the row make ready to rush out."



One whose features I could not distinguish entered, carrying in one hand a lantern, in the other a basket.

"Oh, I shall keep awake, never fear. But just one question more. How did you get in?"

"Don Iago and Captain Comacho managed that. The captain, who is very friendly, got an order for Corporal Tambo to bring the prisoner's supper, and I am Corporal Tambo."

"Good! Now go, and may we meet again soon," quoth I, as we shook hands.

"Buena noche, Señor Colonel," said John, as the sentry let him out; and I answered: "Buena noche, Corporal, many thanks for bringing me so good a supper."

And with the supper he had brought news that gave me an appetite. I had thought never to eat, or care to eat, again; now I felt hungry, and knowing that I should need all my strength and, possibly, have to go on short commons for twenty-four hours, I made a hearty meal. Then I lighted a cigar at the lantern which Ready had left me, and waited for further developments. But I was too excited to be inactive, and after pacing about for a while it struck me that I might do something with my knife to weaken the door.

The screws were too rusty to be drawn, but I dug and cut round the hinges until they became so loose that a push from without or a wrench from within would burst their fastenings. Then it occurred to me that I had perhaps gone too far, that the mere opening of the door might cause it to fall by its own weight, and if anybody came into the carcel I should be found out and my escape prevented, a possibility which, though remote, made me very uneasy, and time dragged more than ever.

Still it passed, the noises in the village, the goings to and fro, the shouts and songs of

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the soldiers, the challenging of the sentries as officers went their rounds, gradually ceased and by nine o'clock all was quiet, save among the cocks and dogs which in tropical South America crow and bark all night long.

An hour went by, then another, and I was beginning to fear some hitch had occurred when a gun went off, followed at a short interval by the trampling of horses, the bellowing of cattle, the bray of asses, the blowing of bugles, cries of: "The Godos, the Godos!" and general uproar.

"Are you there?" asked in English a voice at the door.

"Yes, give a push, but not too hard. The hinges are cut away."

Which Santleo did, and as the door yielded I contrived to let it down without much din.

"How about the sentries?" I asked.

"One went, as I bade him, the other would not budge, so I had to take strong measures. But we have no time to waste in words. Let us hence."

"Whither? The road in both directions is thronged with troops."

"Over the river."

"Without the Cazique and John Ready?"

"They know the trysting place and will follow, are perhaps there already. Come."

Don Iago led the way, though I don't know how he found it, so dark was the night.

Luckily the water was shallow and scant, and after some scrambling and splashing we reached the opposite bank, and taking a track with which my companion seemed familiar presently came to a maize field, and there made a halt.

"Now for the call," said Santleo, and then gave a perfect imitation of the strangely human cry of the goatsucker. This was thrice repeated at intervals, and after a while answered, on which we and those whom we sought, guided by the sounds, drew near to each other.

To make assurance doubly sure Santleo now imitated the song of the gallineta de monte or forest hen, to which a reply came in the voice of the arco, a bird whose drum-like notes are often heard in the stillness of the night.

"Is it well with you?" he asked as a rustling among the maize announced the approach of our friends.

"It is well," responded Tamanac.

"Where are the horses?"

"Not far off; but hereabouts tracks are so many and the darkness is so thick that we shall do better to trust to Chocoto's nose than my leading."

The Cazique spoke to the dog, stroking its head, whereupon the sagacious animal, after questing round for a minute or two, gave tongue and set off at a slow run, closely followed by his master and the rest of us. When this strange chase had gone on some fifteen minutes we heard the neigh of a horse, and shortly afterwards came to a hollow begirt with bushes, and there found a black fellow sitting before a fire smoking a churumbela (a curved pipe much used in Venezuela).

"Are the horses all here, Pablo?" inquired Don Iago.

"Si, señor, grazing among the trees."

In Pablo I recognised Santleo's servant, a Zambo of the llanos, who was greatly attached to him.

"I did not know Pablo was to go with us," I remarked to Santleo, as we sat down by the fire.

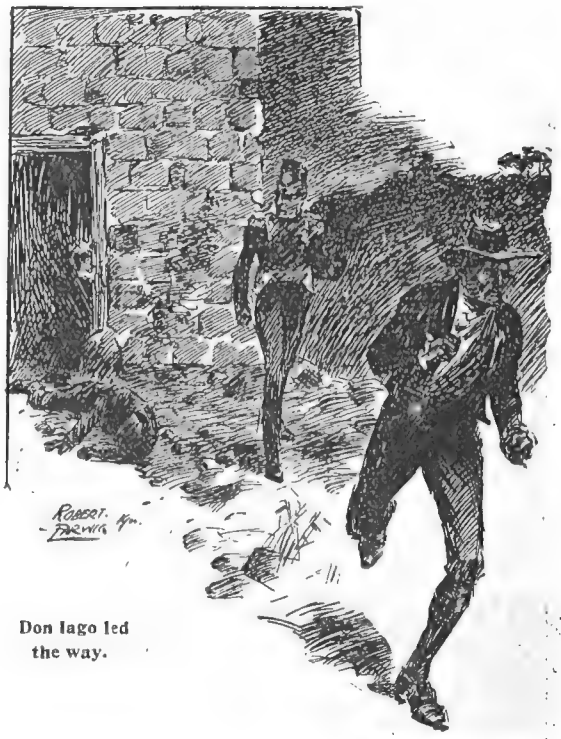
"We needed help, and he is as true as steel. Without him we could not have got the horses and kit over, and without horses we should be badly off."

"I am greatly beholden to you all. You have saved my life at the hazard of your own. What can I say more?"

"I can if you cannot. Your life being at stake because you refused to commit murder, it was the duty of all who call themselves your friends, especially of your compadre, to hazard and, if needful, sacrifice their lives to save yours. We have come off well, my only regret is that I was not able to deal with Urdenetta as he deserves."

"To do that effectually would have been to commit murder first and suicide afterwards. Urdenetta is always surrounded by his staff and his guard. Your life is worth more than his."

"That may be, yet he is in the way of doing more harm in the world than I shall do good, and he has not even the redeeming qualities of high courage and good generalship. It would be well for his country if he could be well hanged."



Don Iago led the way.

"Undoubtedly. Do you think we shall be followed?"

"No; they cannot track us by night, and the division must march, if not at three o'clock, not later than sunrise, for on Thursday they have to rejoin Bolivar, and Urdenetta though he will rage at being baulked of his revenge, is not such a fool as to wreck his leader's plans on the off-chance of recapturing you."

"We shall have to stay here till dawn?"

"Yes, and then recross the river. There is no road on this side."

"Which is your way?"

"Towards the setting sun."

"And mine towards the mouth of the Orinoco."

"For you a way of difficulty and danger. Should news of your flight reach San Fernando or Angostura before you get thither you will be in evil case. If you are in no hurry to return to England why not come with me?"

"Are you in earnest?"

"Of a surety, and I shall be glad of your company."

"But you don't say whither? To your home?"

"To my home and my people; but not having authority I cannot promise you a welcome, yet when they hear my tidings I have no more doubt that a fatted calf will be killed for you than that one will be killed for me."

"A fatted calf! But you are not a prodigal."

"I hope not, only a wanderer, and my time is finished. Besides, I want to go home. There is no child of Manoa who does not yearn to return to his native mountains, how far soever he may roam. Ever since the coming of the Cazique I have been terribly homesick"

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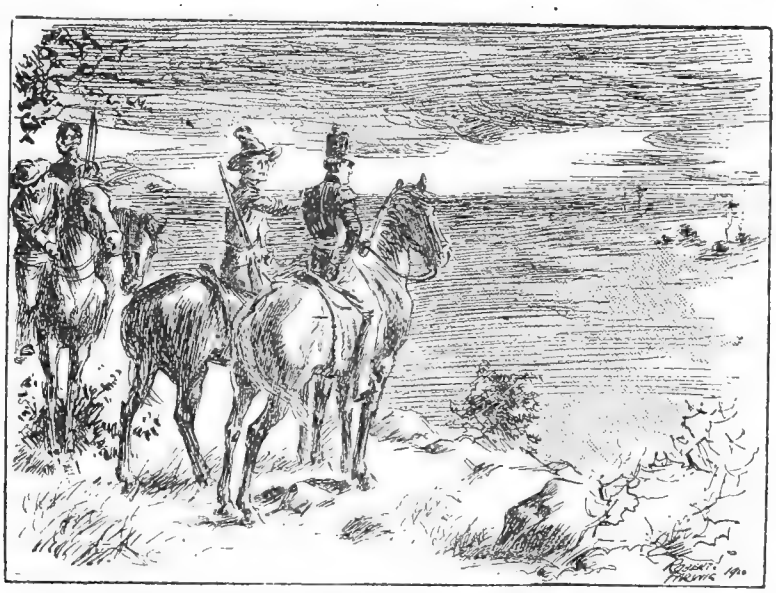
When I asked Santleo what he meant by these mysterious allusions he shook his head and answered:

"Not yet, I have said too much. Will you go?"

"With all my heart."

"It is a far and toilsome journey. We shall have to cross great plains without roads, broad rivers without bridges or ferries, traverse pathless forests, climb lofty mountains and undergo hardships. We shall travel by unfrequented ways, avoiding cities and civilised settlements, which will be all the easier as there are few of them. Once we are clear of these sierras we shall be out of danger except from the elements and wild animals, and wherever there are Indians Tamanac has friends who will render us all the help in their power."

This, though mysterious, was satisfactory; Don Iago not being a man who spoke at random.



"We are on the edge of what is probably the greatest plain in the world," said Santleo.

Three hours before dawn the blowing of bugles and the beating of drums apprised us that the troops were preparing for a move, but not being sure that all were gone we did not follow their example till peep of day, when Pablo went down to the river to reconnoitre.

"Not a man to be seen," he reported on his return. "Only women, who are fighting the turkey buzzards and burying their dead."

Urdenetta had not even interred his victims.

"Let us mount and be gone," said Santleo. "If these poor women see us they will take us for patriots and flee, while if we tarry till their men come back we shall either have to kill some of them or be killed ourselves, for they would be sure to attack us, and of killing there has been more than enough."

So recrossing the river we took once more to the road and turned our faces southward.

"There is another reason for not tarrying, which is also a good reason for hastening on," observed Don Iago, when we were well started. "We have villages to pass where the patriots are not greatly beloved, and if the news of the massacre were to precede us we might have to fight for our lives and, perhaps, fail therein. Until we reach the llanos we must be very circumspect, and give no occasion for offence."

On this we fell to discussing our itinerary, and the provision it would be necessary to make for a journey in the course of which we should have to travel for days in succession through countries without human habitation, and without meeting a human being. Finding, as I suspected, that Santleo's means consisted mainly of claims on the Republic, I placed at his disposal all the cash in my possession, which, as I had not yet touched the proceeds of my last draft, was more than enough for the purpose. The greater part of it was in gold, divided in two portions, one of which was carried in my belt, the other in Ready's, in such sort that nobody could take it from us without first taking our lives.

"You have relieved my mind of an anxiety," said Don Iago, "for, though I did not like to hint as much, we cannot travel expeditiously, or in anything like comfort, without making a considerable outlay. We need horses and attendants, also sumpter mules, and if the rains begin before we are clear of the llanos we may be weather-bound at some hut or hamlet for weeks, where, of course, we should have to pay for our entertainment."

This point settled, and a hasty and very scanty breakfast consumed, we went on, and towards noon came to a village through which the troops had passed, helping themselves to whatever they could lay hands on. The inhabitants had returned, and our arrival caused a good deal of commotion; but on being assured that we were peaceful travellers, willing to pay liberally for whatever we needed and they could supply, we were kindly treated, enjoyed a good meal, replenished our kits and bought hammocks, cobijas, food, and a few other things.

For the reason already mentioned we did not halt for siesta, going on till dark, bivouacking in a palm forest, and doing "sentry go" in turn.

Thus we travelled for several days, avoiding beaten tracks, calling at villages and farmhouses only when we desired to supplement the game, on which we chiefly subsisted, with other food.

At length, after traversing a beautiful mountain region, we came in sight of the llanos. A vast and apparently interminable plain stretched out before us, brown, barren, and desolate. It looked like some vast sea which had been turned into a dry and thirsty land, and a few tall and solitary trees, that might have been mistaken for masts, made the resemblance all the more striking.

"We are on the edge of what is probably the greatest plain in the world," said Santleo. "It extends to the foot of the Bolivian Andes, nearly a thousand miles."

"And about this mysterious mountain whither we are going. Is that a thousand miles away?"

"Would that be too far for you?"

"Not at all. I would go twice as far to learn the secret."

"What secret?"

"The secret you have so closely guarded. Who are your people, whose speech is English—for that English is your second, if not your first, mother tongue, I have no doubt whatever—and why you call yourself a child of Manoa."

"You must have patience, dear compadre. No common stranger should I dare take to the mountain. To no common stranger would the secret be imparted, but I am sure that when our chief men learn who you are they will agree with me that you have a right to know all we can tell you."

(To be continued.)

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SHORT STORIES ABOUT THE ELECTION.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humourous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of "Ghosts," by K. and Hesk th Prichard, to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source *must* be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. G. A. Brown, of 19 Bristo Place, Edinburgh. Attempts this week must deal with Stories about GHOSTS, and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, October 29th. Post-cards only, please.

Lost by One.

IN a certain Northern burgh the contest had been very keen and resulted in a win by a single vote.

On the day following the election the unsuccessful candidate met one of his constituents who had voted for the first time.

"Well, John, we have given them a hard tussle."

"Don't mention it, sir; it has fairly upset me. Just fancy—beaten by one vote. It must have been very annoying to you, I know."

"Oh, a little; but better luck next time, John."

"It makes me angry to think of it. Some people don't know who they'll vote for, and others won't tell. That's not my style, though. After voting for you yesterday I put my card in my pocket, and can let anyone see who I voted for. I'm not ashamed to tell. Here it is."

He produced his voting card, but found that he was talking to empty space, as the disappointed one had fled to soliloquize regarding the possible effect of that lost vote. G. A. B.

Improved On.

MRS. M. was reading the newspaper to her unlettered husband

"'It is expected,' she droned, 'that the organ of the opposite party will make a great noise now that Lord X. has consented to take the chair at this afternoon's mass meeting.'"

"Is it?" cried Mr. M., getting up with decision and reaching for his hat. "Then I shall go. I've often said 'at these 'ere political meetings would be all the better for a bit of lively music." R. A. H. G.

A Tory Sheep's Head.

A PROMINENT Conservative in Mansfield during the recent election called on a Radical butcher, who had a number of sheep's heads for sale, and said!

"Mr. Butcher, I presume those sheep's heads are Radicals?"

"Yes," replied the butcher.

"Well," says the Conservative, "I want a Conservative sheep's head."

"Oh, indeed," answered the butcher, "I can soon oblige you."

He took one head and cut it in halves, and, taking out the brains, said,

"Here is a Conservative sheep's head."

The Tory walked away, sorry he had spoken.

W. H.

A Man of Peace.

AT a political meeting in one of our country villages the other evening, a well-known farmer was called upon to preside. Having taken the chair, he proceeded thus:

"Gentlemen, I'm a man o' peace, an' I want the meeting conducted in a quiet and orderly manner. Hauns up those in favour of oor candidate."

Instantly, a shower of hands were raised.

"Noo, then, hauns up for Mr. S—," naming the candidate for the other side.

Very few hands were shown.

Addressing some of the supporters of his own side, the chairman said:

"Chuck those other beggars oot, an' let us get on wi' the meeting."

T. F.

A Novel Economy.

A FARM labourer who had a very vague idea about voting (this being the first time he had been entitled to do so), was questioned by several of his neighbours as to how he was going to vote at the forthcoming election. But he always gave them the same answer.

"I tell thee I baint a-goin to give anybody my vote."

After a while two very energetic canvassers came along and asked him if he would kindly give his vote for Mr. So-and-So.

He gave a fierce glare at them and shouted:

"Now, thee look yer, mister, it ain't no good for thee to come here trying to get my vote off me. I never had one afore, and now I got it I'se a-going to stick to it." W. J.

How Did He Vote?

I OVERHEARD a party of miners one night last week in animated discussion outside a public-house as to the respective merits of the two candidates contesting the division.

One of the gentlemen is a notorious Pro-Boer, and, as a consequence, has become very unpopular with his constituents.

"Well, I don't know what to do," said one fellow. "I can't vote for that Pro-Boer, and I don't feel like voting Tory."

"I'll tell yo chaps what yo mun all do," said a man who had just quitted the polling-booth, joining the group. "Yo mun vote neutral, like me!"

J. W.

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Wetter and Better.

After listening to a political address, in which the speaker set forth the benefits conferred by his party on the community, a shrewd old Yorkshire farmer was asked what he thought of the speech.

"Well," was his laconic reply. "I doant know, but I think sax hours' rain would ha dun us a deal mair good." R. P.

A Widow's Vote.

It is always difficult to persuade the woman ratepayer that she has no vote; but a lady in widow's weeds, who presented herself recently at one of the polling-booths in a borough election, had a very ingenious reason for claiming the suffrage, and was particularly reluctant to relinquish her claim.

"I know I can't vote for myself," she said indignantly, "but I am here to vote for my late husband."

C. R. F.

Only Mr. at Election Times.

The Newcastle-on-Tyne fight is not so old yet that it will fail to serve as a peg for an anecdote of a very polite canvasser.

"Well, Mr. Duffy, how are you to-night," he asked an Elswick labourer. "We've come to ask you for your vote."

"Indade, that's what I'm thinking, for Jack Duffy only gets Misther at election toimes," the voter replied with an amused smile. He had been canvassed before.

C. F.

Moral Support.

"Sir, a thousand congratulations!" gushed a toadying builder to a newly-elected M.P. "The town could not possibly have a better representative than you. You are all that the most exacting could desire."

The new member received these courtesies somewhat coldly, for he had good reason to doubt the builder's sincerity.

"May I ask you, sir," he inquired bluntly, "if you gave me your vote?"

"No, sir, I confess I did not," responded the builder not one whit abashed. "But I rode to the poll in one of your conveyances, and the moral effect of that was tremendous." R. A. G.

A Determined Voter.

At the Barnsley election, in 1895, a horse appeared in the polling-booth. The place was Ryhill National School, where Mr. Robert Ogle, relieving officer, presided.

There were not many voters polling, and the hours were hanging heavily on the official's hands, when the door was quietly pushed open, and there appeared—a horse's head!

Mr. Ogle ran to the door to drive the intruder away, but when he got there he found the horse was mounted, and in a second the animal was in the school, with his rider on his back.

Mr. Ogle demanded to know what was meant by this proceeding, and learnt that the rider-elector had lost the use of his legs some time previously; but being determined to record his vote on the present occasion, had got himself lifted on horseback, and had thus come to the poll, horse and all.

He accomplished his purpose, for the vote was duly recorded. A. L.

A Hard Task.

It is wonderful how well an election canvasser knows everybody, even if he has never seen or heard of them before. One had a take-down the other day. Calling at a house in Islington he said:

"Is Mr. Smith in?"

"No," said Mrs. S., who had answered the door.

"Well," said the canvasser, "I have called on behalf of Mr. Brown, Conservative candidate for this part. I——"

"Oh," said Mrs. S., "Mr. Smith does not take any interest in such things now."

"Well he ought to, I think I can talk him over."

"I don't think you can."

"Oh, yes I can; when will he be in? I see no reason why I should not get him to vote."

"I do, then," said Mrs. S.

"Why?" he demanded.

"Because he has been dead over two months."

J. W. L.

The State of the Poll.

It was election day in a little village, and, being the parliamentary election, all the natives had a holiday and were enjoying themselves at booths and merry-go-rounds.

Jack Saunders, the farmer's handy man, had made many unsuccessful attempts to climb the greasy pole and annex the substantial leg of mutton.

At length, his patience exhausted and his money all spent, he wended his way homewards in a somewhat muddled condition. He chanced on the road to meet his employer, who, anxious as to the election, inquired:

"What is the state of the poll, John?" Judge of the good man's astonishment when Jack, whose thoughts were still harping on the envied leg of mutton, replied in an earnest tone:

"Gad, zir, I 'ooden vise 'ee to try it, vur I never zeed 'un greasier in all my life." W. C.

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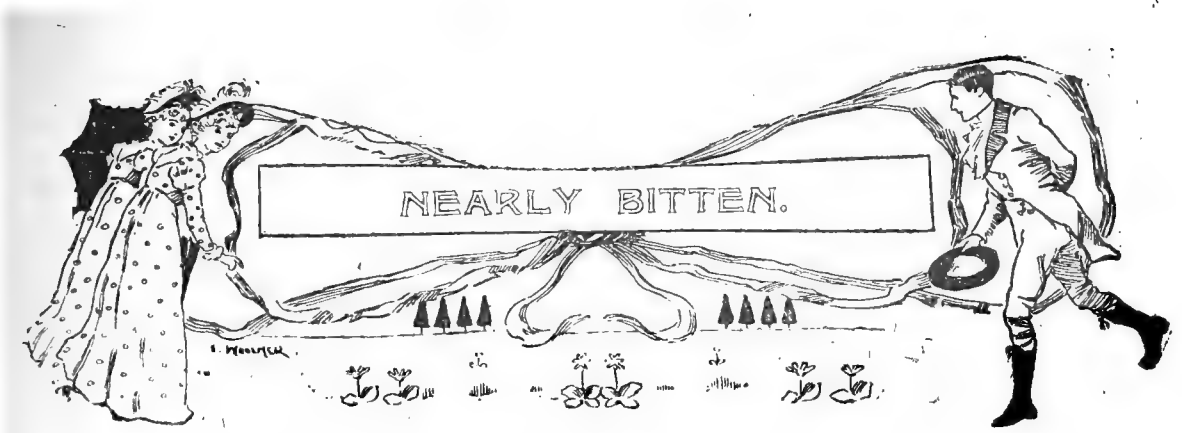

THERE is no doubt about it, it was time I had a holiday—i.e., a real holiday in which I could leave business absolutely behind, no letters to follow, one in fact where I should become the merest unit in the world, and forget for the brief period all ties.

My parents were alive and I had brothers and sisters. Of course usually I spent my holidays with them, but this time I was going to try what a complete change from all familiar surroundings would do for my health, which was not, at the present, good. For another thing, which for my departure was distinctly convenient, I was perfectly heart-whole—so rare a thing for a young man.

So it was that one broiling day towards the end of July, I found myself in the heart of the Swiss Mountains after an extremely hot and uncomfortably dirty journey from Paris.

For my pocket's sake it was with a trip that I was taking the mere skeleton of my holiday. I was taking the two out and in journeys at the beck of the tourist agent, leaving the intermediate portion of the holiday to be spent according to my impromptu ideas.

On my outward journey I found to my satisfaction that I was the only member of the company travelling alone. When I arrived at Lucerne, and was preparing to enter my name in the books of the Hotel Isberg, I saw just in front of me a girl of about twenty and a woman apparently much older who had booked themselves. I had to wait for a little while before getting to the book, and had time to recognise them as two whose faces I had noticed on the boat before reaching Dieppe, and again on leaving Paris.

Though I was in such a lazy, nonchalant condition of mind, determined to forget my fellow creatures, I found the girl's features rather attractive, and the interest thus aroused was increased by the glance of slight interest which she gave me as she turned round. I busied myself entering my name underneath those of Miss Purcher and Miss Ella Purcher, and when I had finished they had gone.

My interest had certainly been awakened though I doubted whether it would last, but for the present I was really anxious to make acquaintance with the fair unknown. I did not, however, care for the look of the elder sister, and rather anticipated no chance could be found by which the desired introduction would be obtained. I was mistaken. As I came out of my room to go down to dinner that evening, a figure was standing in the doorway of a room in the same corridor nearer the head of the stairs. As I advanced both the sisters came out of this room and went down stairs in front of me. The dropping of her fan by the elder sister struck me afterwards as a curious chance, but, as I hastened to pick it up, I was only too glad to have the opportunity of making the acquaintance of the younger. A few commonplace remarks at the door made all three feel quite at home, and before I knew it I was seated at the *table d'hôte* between the two sisters, having been shown straight to this seat through the attendant's conviction that we were of one party.

That evening was sufficient to make me fast friends of the two—for the sake of the younger. The elder, and apparently the chaperone, though to a certain extent neglected, seemingly did not mind so long as her younger sister was contented. This the latter certainly was, and in an hour we were talking as if we had been life-long friends. The majority of the party were on the tour for a fortnight, but I intended to stay an extra week, and was delighted to find, on telling them, that my new friends were going to do the same.

Excursions were planned, up the heights and across the lake and to the thousand and one interesting spots. It took very few days for me to be hopelessly in love with the younger girl, and I could not help feeling my wishes were reciprocated. The elder sister was particularly obliging, pleading that she often liked to be alone in the midst of such magnificent scenery. Accordingly Ella and I were much alone together. Already I thought of her as Ella as her sister called her.

And so the days went on, till I got to dread the end coming before I had spoken of these vital matters to the girl.

I knew in my cool moments I was rash, for I knew nothing of them, and yet the "all together" seemed only too satisfactory. As the time grew shorter Ella grew more and more openly attracted by my company.

Two days were left of the holiday, and though not yet quite brave enough for the final venture, I had managed to tell the girl I wanted her to go back with me alone to our favourite spot the next day. She could not fail to be aware of my intention from my very looks and manner, and I flattered myself the biggest part of the battle was over. That evening I went up to bed earlier than usual after the girls had retired. I generally spent an hour or two smoking after they had gone, but this evening I was too excited.

The evening was very close, and before lighting up I spent some minutes with my elbows on my window-sill gazing out into the night. There was no moon and I

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could scarcely distinguish the rest of the building. Most of the tourists had left and there were few lights in the bedrooms.

All at once my attention was aroused by the sound of voices. They were little above a whisper, but in the stillness of the night little strain was required to distinguish them. Ella's voice rivetted my attention and there was no mistaking the very manly voice of her sister.

My first instinct was to retire, but then my wish to hear good of myself prevailed and I listened.

"To-morrow will do it all right, eh, Ella?"

"Yes, I think I've got him up to the scratch. He has not been a very hard nut, though."

My idol was in danger of being broken if that was how she talked. I listened eagerly.

"No! you've had an easier job than usual this time. He ought to be good for a couple of hundred, anyhow."

What did it mean? Easier job than usual! Couple of hundred! I puzzled to no purpose.

"Yes, he's an easier game than old Fradney, though the old chap *did* come off second best."

A light began to dawn on me.

There was a sound of subdued laughter.

Then Ella again spoke. "Well, anyhow, we'll go up to the top again. You get on that other peak—you know—and if you see me come forward then's your time. You can easily get round by that stony path at the back, and you can reach us in five minutes or so."

I had heard quite enough, and as the talking ceased I went to bed, but not to sleep. Night time was to give me some help.

As we had arranged, next morning after breakfast we started comparatively early. Before doing so, however, I had a long talk with an Englishman, in charge of the tour to a large extent, and whose casual acquaintance with me had shown me he was to be confided in.

We sat down—Ella and I—at the top of the Rigi.

All around us was magnificent mountain and lake scenery well conducive to love-making which I showed my fair companion I was very ready for.

Gradually leading up to what she expected me to say I had almost put the question when suddenly, with a startled air, she got up from my side and asked to be left alone for a minute "to think" the little jade said.

She walked to the edge of the small plateau and stood there with her head bent and her back to me for two or three minutes. Then, with eyes demurely lowered, she sauntered back to me with her hands behind her back. She certainly was a pretty girl and her appearance made me wish my dream was not to be so ignominiously dispelled. Then, sinking down by my side, she half raised her eyes to mine.

I had not finished. I was going to carry the matter through. And so, looking up to her and with my arms about her, I declared my love.

She was silent for fully a minute, though little actions showed her acceptance of my love. Then suddenly she sprang up with a little shriek and confronted me, at the same time I was astonished to see a man standing behind us.

"So, sir, *this* is your game."

The appearance was that of a man, the voice was the voice of the elder Miss Purcher.

Giving me no time to speak, he or she persisted—

"Of course this cannot stop here. You understand you cannot compromise my wife like this with impunity."

"Your wife!" I exclaimed, "whatever do you mean? And what do you mean by masquerading in men's clothes?"

"Mean, my good man," said he—"I mean that that lady is my wife. "For convenience sake"—with a grin—"we have come here in disguise, and will expose you unless you give me immediately some compensation. You probably carry your cheque book with you, sir?"

But the gods were not with him.

As he finished speaking my friend the manager and a Swiss policeman appeared upon the scene, and, amid shrieks from Ella and oaths from her husband, they were handcuffed to prevent trouble.

My friends had bided their time till the conspirators had made their intention very plain.

And so the tour to Lucerne ended in an exciting way for three of the party, and I returned to town well pleased with the result, though not altogether proud of my reminiscences, and a notorious pair of continental criminals—man and wife—spent their holidays for the next year or two amid less poetical surroundings.

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THE LEOPARD'S SPOTS.

THE old saying that a leopard cannot change its spots, meaning that you must not expect a radical change in a man's nature, has been exemplified in many ways; the case of John Buckland is not the least peculiar of those examples.

Buckland was the son of a hunter and trapper of wide reputation who was killed in a stampede of cattle when his boy was only ten years old. As Jack's mother had died three or four years previously, the boy was left alone in the world to shift for himself.

Those were rough times and Jack found himself buffeted from pillar to post, receiving more cuffs and kicks than kind words, so he grew up into a young man with rather crude notions of justice and with the feeling that the hands of most people were against him and that when an ill turn was done against him he must use every effort to repay it with interest.

This warped mental condition caused him to see adverse actions where no ill was meant, and his face always bore a defiant expression, while his restless eyes seemed to be for ever on the watch for an attack from one quarter or the other.

He had just completed his twentieth year when an event occurred which proved a turning point in his life. He had conceived a liking for the daughter of a hunter, a young woman about three years his senior, and this liking quickly developed into passionate, unreasoning love.

He had not spoken to Bertha Hayes on the subject; he had worshipped her from afar until his love grew too strong for further restraint. Then he boldly approached her and asked her to marry him.

The offer of marriage was so unexpected that Bertha looked incredulous for a moment or two; then she laughed at him and asked if he had gone mad.

Angered at this, Jack responded hotly, this was too much for Bertha, who shared the common opinion that Jack Buckland was "of no account" and had certainly never imagined that he would care to make such a proposal, and with a contemptuous curl of her lips she bade him be gone, adding that she was already engaged to a man. Jack, stung both by her manner and her words, went from her presence, scarcely able to contain his rage.

What Bertha may have said to her father and her lover is unknown, but Jack Buckland found himself in still worse odour than he had ever been before in the little community, and he was glad to escape the smiles and sneers of the inhabitants by joining an expedition into the territory of a branch of the Cherokee Indians. It was a risky undertaking, but what of that?

There was a fight with the Indians, and the expedition returned without Buckland, who had been wounded and carried off by the redskins; men shuddered as they thought of the fate that undoubtedly had befallen the young fellow, and he was looked upon as dead.

But quite a different fate had been reserved for Jack. The chief of the tribe had an idea that the young man might prove useful to them in the struggle against the whites, and by his command Jack was nursed and restored to health, every kindness being lavished upon him.

The contrast between the treatment he had received from his own people and that meted out to him by the Indians was so glaring to his perverted imagination that he willingly decided to throw in his lot with them. From that day he did his best to change his spots, so to speak, and to sink the white man's nature in that of the redskins.

More than six years had elapsed and, to judge by appearances, the spots had almost if not entirely faded away. Buckland appeared to have become a Cherokee; he hunted with them and fought with them against other tribes and against the white hunters—fighting with as much energy as if he had been born with a red skin.

In his determination to alter his nature he had schooled himself to look on at some of the instances of

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torture inflicted upon captured enemies, but there was just this reservation—that the prisoners had not been white men.

Then came the test of the genuineness of the change. If it be possible to effect a radical alteration in one's nature, then Jack Buckland had changed. The alteration in him was seemingly far more thorough than in those savage or half-savage men who have been converted by missionary effort from the ways of savagery to the manners and religion of Great Britain; he was just as capable of withstanding the test as they are. How did he come out of the ordeal?

Returning from a hunting expedition one afternoon, he found that a white man had been captured. Three of the warriors had come unexpectedly upon a hunter reposing on the ground; he must have been possessed by an extravagant sense of security, amazing in a man of experience, for his weapons lay beyond his reach and he did not know that the Indians were upon him until they stood before him.

The warriors themselves were utterly surprised to find that the man who had fallen such an easy victim was one who had acquired a reputation for the manners in which he tracked and fought with the redskins.

The man attempted to rise as soon as he became aware that the Indians were upon him, and the latter, quic ly recovering from their astonishment, seized and bound him.

Ben Harvey was a man just over thirty, although he looked somewhat older. He had spent the greater part of his life on the plains and knew the Indian nature better than that of his own people. He reviled himself for his stupidity, but walked stolidly with his captors, for he knew that it was useless to make any attempt at escape or to appeal for anything in the shape of mercy.

He had assumed some of the stoic nature of the Indians as a result of his mode of living, and his face usually betrayed as little of his feelings as did those of the redskins. In the course of his career he had never seen an Indian express so much surprise, and the fact flattered and amused him, although he was annoyed at his own stupidity.

But suddenly his bronzed cheeks lost some of their tan and a wild, anxious look shone in his eyes. Heavens, what about Bertha and the little girl!

They were to cross the plai s to their new home with an escort of two men only, and Harvey had arranged to meet them. It had never occurred to anyone to suppose that Indians had ventured so far from their usual haunts; the savages had a wholesome recollection of the fact that they had been severely dealt with and for the past three or four years they had kept within well-defined limits.

This accounted for Harvey's sense of security in some measure, but a man of experience—a man hated as much as he was—ought never to relax his vigilance.

The Indians were growing bold again, and Harvey now awoke to the fact that there might be grave danger for his wife and child. He could on'y hope that the Indians had not gone so far in that direction.

As for himself, he was in a tight place, but he did not despair, for he had on two previous occasions escaped from the clutches of his foes when the chances seemed just as much against him. It was rather different now, for he was a married man, for his death meant grief and probable privation for two other beings.

Buckland's curiosity was aroused, he wished to see who this white man was and find out whether he knew the prisoner or not. He did not stop to ask for particulars, but made his way to where the captive was bound to the trunk of a tree and guarded by two young warriors.

"Does Angry Eye wish to see the captive?" asked one of the minor chiefs, as he saw Jack making his way towards the tree.

"Yes, Red Wolf," answered Buckland in the native dialect. They were all brief of speech.

The captive had his eyes closed and his head was bent; he was thinking of his wife and child and hoping that they would escape. The cords had been drawn tightly round his arms and body and were causing him pain and much discomfort; he was therefore too preoccupied to notice who might come or go.

Buckland looked at him with a cynical smile for a second or so; then an exclamation came from his lips, and the sound caused the captive to look up. Harvey noted that the face differed from the ordinary type of Indian, but the head-dress and clothing were similar to those of the savages round him.

"So it is you?" said Buckland sarcastically. "You have fallen into our hands at last, Harvey. We have seen very little of you lately!"

"By Heaven!" ejaculated Harvey. "It is——"

"Angry Eye, the Indian!" interrupted Buckland.

"Bah! You mean John Buckland, the renegade!" returned Harvey contemptuously. "I suppose you and your friends intend to murder me?"

"You will be treated as all our captives are treated," replied Angry Eye coldly. "The white man takes years to kill men of his own colour, and tortures them all the time, as I know by experience. We do not take long about it—as you will soon learn by experience!"

"Can a man change from a civilised creature to a savage?" asks Harvey, addressing no one in particular. Then, losing his usual calm, he burst forth: "You villain! Set me free and give me a knife or a hatchet, and I will fight you or any of your crew!"

Some of the Indians had drawn near, attracted by the talk between the two men, and there were murmurs of anger from several pairs of lips. Angry Eye, who had some influence with his fellow braves, motioned them back and addres ed Harvey.

"We have met twice in battle, soon after I left the haunts of white men and became a brave among these noble beings whom you and your degraded race call savages," he replied. "I have a grudge to p y; you are the man who married Bertha! You are the creature she called a man, by which she meant that I was not a man. You sided with those who jeered at me. We have you now, without running any risk; why should we set you free so that we may have to run some risk in killing you?" and Buckland laughed derisively.

Harvey remained silent. It was useless to appeal to this man, who had so changed that he had become a savage—with the few good qualities of the savage, probably, but with all his bad qualities in an intensified form, and one of those bad qualities was the fiercest kind of revengefulness. The leopard's spots had vanished!

The elder chiefs chuckled in a satisfied manner when they learnt what had taken place, for many of the braves understood enough English to follow the conversation. The white men had tried to win over the Indians to their ideas, and had succeeded in several instances; it gratified them to know that they also had made a convert. They might hope to make others!

But Buckland's ordeal was not over; it was only just beginning, and the real test was to come.

The Indians were becoming venturesome and were ex-

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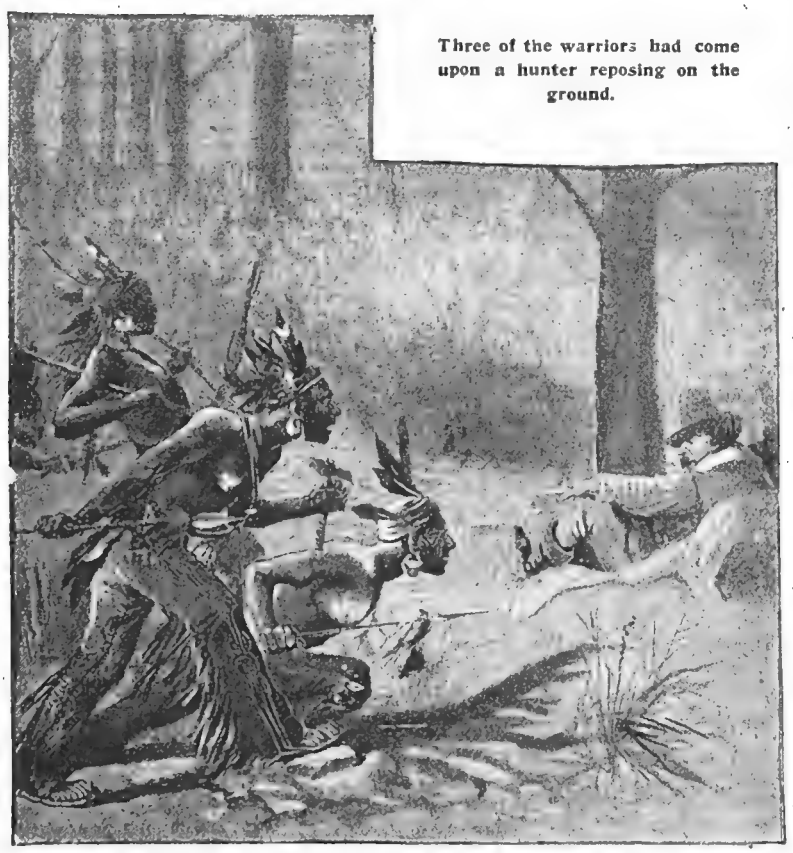
tending their excursions farther and farther across the plains. It was intended to torture and kill Harvey that evening, but the entertainment was delayed. News had arrived that there was a chance of making other captives and the festivities were deferred in the hope that other victims might be placed by his side.

On the following morning a party of braves set out for a journey across the plains. Angry Eye was not one of the party; he and his companions had not been successful in their search for game on the previous day and they had started again on the same errand in order to retrieve their reputation.

That day passed and the next day was half spent before either party returned to camp. The first sight that met the eyes of Buckland was a white woman and child being led captive by the triumphant Indians, and he soon heard that a small caravan had been stopped, the two white men killed after a sharp fight in which three of the braves had been sent to the happy hunting ground, and the white woman and girl had been brought to the camp to be killed or saved for a worse fate.



Three of the warriors had come upon a hunter reposing on the ground.

One glance at the captives was enough for Buckland; it was Bertha and a girl whose resemblance to the woman proved her to be Bertha's daughter.

At that moment there was a scream and a cry of "My husband!" from Bertha, who had caught sight of Ben tied to the tree; she made an attempt to get free from her captors and run to his side, but she was forcibly prevented.

A murmur of delight arose from the Indians; they had not only secured a hated enemy, but his family also. Truly, the medicine man had spoken well when he said that fortune was to favour them.

The mother and child were taken close to Ben Harvey so that the savages might gloat over their misery. Bertha looked round despairingly for a face that might show some slight expression of sympathy or mercy, and her eyes met those of Buckland. She stared at him and then gasped his name.

The white chief remained motionless, Bertha stretched out her hands in supplication.

"Jack Buckland, you are one of us, though you wear the dress of an Indian; help me, save my husband and my child!"

"I am not a man!" was the cold reply.

"Don't ask for pity for me from that savage!" cried Harvey to his wife. "He is the worst Indian of them all!"

"I can't believe that a man can change his nature," cried Bertha, realising more and more how desperate their position was.

Her despair at the fate which awaited her husband and child, to say nothing of her own, made her resolve to try the apparently impossible.

"Jack Buckland," she continued, still holding her hands towards him, "I was unfair towards you, that may be, but is such a small thing to make you turn from your own people and allow them to suffer inhuman tortures?"

"You are not the only one who ill-treated me," was the cold reply.

Bertha moved towards him. The braves looked on in wonder; they did not understand this thing, but some indefinable feeling prevented them from interrupting.

Bertha knelt down in front of Buckland, her child holding her dress and staring with frightened eyes at the warriors, and took the hands of the white chief in hers. He allowed her to do so passively; he betrayed not the least sign of emotion of any kind.

Bertha Harvey felt that she had a double task to perform; she must save her husband and daughter at any cost, but it also seemed to her that she owed it as a duty to civilisation and as some reparation for the past to draw this man away from savagedom.

"Buckland," she said in a low, pleading voice, while her eyes were fixed just as pleadingly on his, "your place is not here. You are not one of these savages; you cannot look into your own heart—search its depths—and say that you uphold their ways, their lives. You cannot stand by and see the three of us sacrificed by these people! You cannot do it! Your heart would torment you all your days with the thought that you

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had been guilty of a crime against your nature! Prove yourself a man—prove to me and to everybody your claim to be regarded as a man—by throwing off the guise of a savage and assuming your real place!"

Despair made her eloquent. She paused for breath and watched for an indication that he was relenting. Then, as if afraid that she might lose ground if she did not press home at once, she continued:

"For the sake of your manhood, help us! Look at this innocent child and ask your heart whether you are really a savage—you know what it means for us! Ask ——"

"Bertha—Mrs. Harvey, I give in!" he gasped.

Her words had touched him, in spite of the remembrance of long ago. No! He was not a savage; he could not change his whole nature. It had been a hideous dream, brought about by brooding over the wrong done to him.

But now that he had swiftly searched his heart, he was awake. His companions were so different from him, he could not become one of them body and soul. The crucial moment had arrived and the leopard's spots showed themselves again.

Buckland now set so work to devise some method of securing the release of the captives. His garb and everything pertaining to the life he had led for the past few years were already becoming distasteful to him. But he must be careful not to show it. He must deal with the Indians after their own cunning methods.

Leading Bertha and her child to the chief of the tribe, he declared in a low, respectful, but firm voice that she had presented a vision to him, and that according to this vision, if the three whites were harmed or held captive, evil fortune would befall the tribe, as a large host of white soldiers would infallibly surround them and kill them all.

This was not in accordance with the saying of the medicine man, but Buckland stuck to his theme, pointing out that he had originally been one of that race which had worked such wonders and that the woman was one of his people who had visions which never lied. There was much bickering and disputation, and it was finally decided to wait till the morrow.

But when the morrow dawned, the captives and Angry Eye, with three horses, were gone and the two guards were found bound and gagged. These guards—one watching Harvey and the other on duty outside the hut in which Bertha and her daughter were confined—both told the same story; they had been stunned by a blow on the back of the head.

There was a hue and cry and the braves set out in pursuit of the fugitives, but they were not overtaken and none of them were ever seen again by the Cherokees.

Buckland left the plains and went to one of the big cities where he became a prosperous merchant; and none of those who knew him in after life would have dreamt that the leopard's spots had even so much as paled in colour.

GEO. KNIGHT.

TOMMY: "I say, Jimmie, wot is classical music?"

Jimmie: "It's the kind you can't understand unless you wear long hair."

MISTRESS: "Why, Bridget, you have your fingers in the soup."

Bridget (reassuringly): "Oh, don't worry mum: it's not hot."

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A French Diamond Robbery.

A TRUE STORY.

It was in the palmiest days of the ill-fated Second Empire. The triumphs of the Crimea were not yet forgotten; the laurels won at Magenta were still verdant and fresh, Sedan, with all its bitter humiliation and disastrous train of tragic consequences, loomed in the misty future, undreamt of amidst the almost fabulous luxury and incredible frivolity which paved the way for the final terrible fiasco.

It was an evening in mid-winter. The Parisian season was at its height, and a brilliant audience had assembled at the Theatre Français to witness the performance of Jules Sandeau's delightful play, *Mademoiselle de la Seiglière*, in which the *rôle* of Destournelles was filled by the great Regnier, and that of Hélène by Madeleine Brohan, then in the zenith of her fame, radiant with youth, beauty, and those fascinations, the outcome of innate talent and refinement which rendered this gifted lady one of the most charming and perfect actresses of modern days.

The Empress was present, graceful and beautiful: the Emperor at her side wrapped in his favourite air of gloomy abstraction, which, like Lord Burleigh's celebrated nod, was supposed to mean so much, yet which, viewed by the impartial light of subsequent veracious history, seems to have signified so little. Several officers in glittering uniforms were in attendance, sparkling with decorations showered upon them by a grateful sovereign; and, among these gallant warriors, conspicuous by reason of the sombreness of his attire, was a solitary, humble, black-coated civilian, in ordinary evening dress, with the inevitable speck of red at his button-hole.

In a box almost immediately opposite that occupied by their imperial majesties, was a young and exceedingly handsome Russian lady, the Countess Ivanhoff, concerning whose manifold graces and fascinations the great world of Paris elected to interest itself considerably at this period.

The beauty and the wit of this fair northern enchantress were the theme of every masculine tongue, and her magnificent diamonds the envy and admiration of all feminine beholders.

The Countess was accompanied by her husband, a fine man of distinguished prepossessing appearance, who looked an embodied refutation of the celebrated Napoleonic aphorism, as though no amount of "scratching" could ever unearth the Cossack element underneath his refined, polished exterior.

The curtain fell after the first act. The Emperor and Empress withdrew during the *entr'acte*. Many humbler mortals followed their example; among them Count Ivanhoff, apparently in nowise disturbed by the fact that the golden youth in the stalls were bringing a small battery of opera glasses to bear upon the dazzling charms of his beautiful wife, with a brazen persistence which we chivalrous Britishers like to flatter ourselves is the monopoly of foreigners.

The Countess leant back in her luxurious fauteuil, fanning herself dreamily, serenely indifferent to the interest she was exciting. In the dim light of the curtain-shaded box, the glitter of her splendid diamonds seemed to form a sort of luminous halo round her graceful head: a myriad of starry brilliants gleamed among the masses of her gold-brown hair; and two priceless stones, popularly reported to be worth that unknown quantity, a king's ransom, flashed and twinkled like twin planets in her little shell-tinted ears.

The Count had not been gone five minutes, when there was a gentle knock at the door; and, in answer to the Countess's "*Entrez*," the attendant appeared, and said deferentially:

"Pardon, Madame la Comtesse; a gentleman charged with a message from her Majesty the Empress waits in the corridor, and desires to know if madame will have the goodness to receive him."

"Certainly! Enter, I beg of you, monsieur," replied the Countess, in the low suave voice, which was not the least of her many attractions, bowing graciously as she recognised the distinguished-looking civilian she had already noticed in close proximity to the Emperor in the imperial box.

The visitor advanced a few steps, and, still standing in deep shadow, said with grave dignity:

"I trust my intrusion may be pardoned. I am desired by her Majesty to ask a favour of Madame la Comtesse, and, at the same time, to beg that she will have the goodness to excuse a somewhat unusual request."

"The obligation will be mine if I can fulfil even the least of her Majesty's wishes," answered the Countess gracefully.

"The case is this," explained the gentleman in a tone of well-oiled ease. "An argument has arisen concerning the size of the diamonds in your earrings and those of the Countess W. The Empress begs that you will intrust one of your pendants to her care for a few moments, as the only satisfactory method of disposing of the vexed question. I will myself return it the instant her Majesty gives it back into my keeping."

"With the greatest pleasure," agreed the Countess, with amiable alacrity, detaching the precious jewel forthwith, and depositing it, without misgiving, in the outstretched palm of the imperial messenger; for, indeed, diamonds were almost as plentiful in the existence of this fortunate lady as in the pages of *Lothair*, and she attached no more importance to them than did the jewel-laden heroines of our late great and lamented Premier.

The Countess bestowed a smile and a gracious bow of dismissal upon her Majesty's distinguished ambassador who responded by a profoundly respectful inclination as he made his exit.

Once safely outside the box, the aristocratic features of this high-bred imperial emissary suddenly lost their serene expression of dignified gravity, and relaxed into a triumphant Mephistophelean grin.

Shortly afterwards Count Ivanoff returned.

"I have been talking to Danvers," he remarked, as he seated himself. "Clever fellow, D——. I am not surprised at the Emperor's partiality for him; he must find him so useful when he is in want of an idea."

"Who is Danvers?" inquired the Countess, with languid interest.

"That is rather a difficult question," replied the Count, smiling; "there are several editions of his biography—all different, probably none of them true.

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He is successful, which is the chief point; moreover, he is entertaining, and, at any rate, looks and speaks like a gentleman, which in these evil days is something—even much. Look, he has just entered the Emperor's box—the man in the black coat."

"Is that Monsieur Danvers?" exclaimed the Countess, waking up to a mild interest in the subject; "if so, he has been here while you were away. He came on the part of the Empress, and carried off one of my earrings, which her Majesty wished to compare with one of the Countess Wahn's."

"Danvers! Impossible! I was talking to him the whole time I was absent, and he only left me at the top of the staircase two seconds before I returned."

"Nevertheless, *mon ami*, he has been here, and has taken my earring. See! it is gone."

"Effectively," agreed the Count, with a grim smile; "but Danvers has not taken it. It is to the last degree unlikely that the Empress would make such a request. Depend upon it you have been the victim of a thief, got up as an accurate copy of the distinguished-looking Danvers."

"Impossible!" cried the Countess in her turn. "The affair is absolutely as I tell you. It was Monsieur Danvers the veritable Monsieur Danvers I see opposite, who came into this box and took away my diamond. Only wait a little, and he will bring it back intact."

"To wait a little is to lessen the chance of its recovery. In any case, I will go and inquire of Danvers, if I can get at him, whether he has been seized with a sudden attack of kleptomania; because the idea of the Empress having sent him roaming about the theatre, borrowing a lady's jewels, I regard as preposterous. Ah, these Parisian sharpers! You do not know what scientific geniuses they are in their way."

With this the Count departed, and the second act was nearly at an end before he returned.

In the meantime, the Countess perceived that she was an object of interest to the occupants of the imperial box, and notably to the "double" of her late aristocratic-looking visitor who, she could still solemnly declare, had stood before her in the flesh.

"I was right," whispered the Count, re-entering and bending over his wife's chair; "Danvers knows nothing of your earring, and, needless to say, the Empress never sent him or anyone else upon such an errand. I have put the matter into the hands of the police, and they will do all that is possible to recover it."

"Really! How very droll!" remarked the Countess with calm nonchalance—for she belonged to that order of impassive statuesque women, who remains mistress of themselves through any quantity of "china fall;" "I will take out the other earring, or people may fancy I am trying to set the fashion of wearing an odd one," and she handed the fellow to the purloined jewel to her husband.

The play came to an end, as even that most excellent feast of reason, a good French play, well acted, must do, sooner or later, in common with all things mundane.

The Countess was duly commiserated by sympathising friends, who one and all declared, behind her back, that they would never have been guilty of the imbecility of trusting so valuable a possession to the tender mercies of however fascinating a stranger; but nothing more was heard of the stolen jewel until the following day at noon, when Count Ivanoff received a note from Danvers to the effect that, as he could not help considering himself partly responsible for the loss of the diamond which had disappeared through the agency of his counterpart he had taken an early opportunity of interviewing the Chief of the Police, who assured him he had good reason to believe the thief had already been traced as far as Brussels.

Early in the afternoon the Countess was about to start for her daily drive in the Bois. The frozen snow lay deep upon the ground, and her sledge, with its two jet-black Russian horses jingling their bells merrily in the frosty air, stood waiting in the courtyard while the Countess donned her furs.

A servant entering announced that an officer of police in plain clothes asked permission to speak with Madame la Comtesse concerning the lost diamond.

"But certainly," agreed madame graciously; "let the officer be shown into the boudoir."

Into the boudoir presently came the Countess, stately, beautiful, fur-clad, buttoning her little gloves. Near the door stood a short wiry-looking man, with keen black eyes, closely-cropped hair, and compact, erect, military figure. The small man clicked his heels together and bowed profoundly in the presence of so much high-born loveliness, while he said with the utmost respect, at the same time laying a letter upon the table:

"I am sent by order of the Chef de Police to inform Madame la Comtesse that the stolen diamond has been satisfactorily traced, but there is unfortunately some little difficulty connected with its identification. I am charged, therefore, to beg that Madame la Comtesse will have the goodness to intrust the fellow earring to the police for a short period, in order that it may be compared with the one found in the possession of the suspected thief. Madame will find that the letter I bring corroborates my statement."

The Countess glanced hastily through the letter, and ringing the bell desired that her maid might be told to bring the remaining earring immediately; this was done, and the dapper little man, bowing deferentially, departed with the precious duplicate safely in his possession.

The Countess descended to her sledge and drove to the club, to call for her husband *en route* for the Bois. Crossing the Place de la Concorde, she related to him the latest incident in the story of the diamond earring.

"You never were induced to give up the other!" cried Count Ivanoff incredulously.

"But I tell you, *mon ami*, an officer of police came himself to fetch it, bringing a letter from his superior vouching for the truth of his statement."

"If the Prefect himself had come, I don't think I should have been cajoled into letting him have it after last night's experience," laughed her husband. "However, for the second time of asking, we will go and inquire."

The coachman turned and drove as directed to the Bureau of Police, at which the Count had lodged his complaint the night before. After a somewhat protracted delay the Count rejoined his wife with a semi-grim look of amusement upon his handsome hirsute face.

"The police know nothing of your detective or his epistolary efforts," he said, drawing the fur rug up to his chin as the impatient horses sped away merrily over the frozen snow; "it was the wrong man they had got hold of at Brussels. Your second earring has been netted by another member of the light-fingered fraternity, and upon my honour I think he was the more accomplished artist of the two!"

And from that unlucky day to this the Countess Ivanoff's celebrated diamond earrings knew her pretty ears no more.

Alaric Carr.

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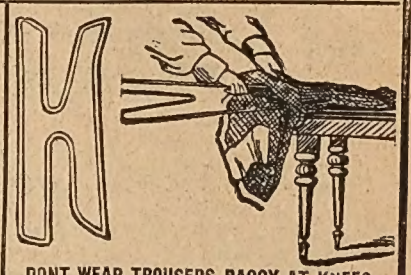

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Transposed Letter Competition.

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Third Prize	**£1.**

LIST No. 1.

ART; CEL; OMW; GIN; BUS.

Here are five sets of letters, and prizes will be awarded to the competitors who send in the longest words containing the letters in each of their combinations.

For example, the following words contain the letters IST in their different combinations: fIST, ITSelf, SIT, STIpend, ouTSIde, adverTISe.

CONDITIONS.

1. Write your attempts on one side of the paper only, and keep until three other lists have appeared.

2. All words must appear in Nuttall's Standard Dictionary.

3. The letters of the combinations must either be underlined or put in capitals in the words in which they occur.

4. In the event of a tie, the prize will be divided.

5. The Editor's decision is final, and competitors must enter on that understanding.

RESULT OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 223 to 228.

The prize of £2 has been awarded to Mr. R. Wigley, of The Ferns, Olton, Warwickshire, whose solution was the first correct one dealt with.

A copy of "Pharaoh's Broker," by Ellsworth Douglas, has been sent to each of the following:

C. Smith, Red House, Westleton, Saxmundham.
P. E. Tavender, 182 Bruntsfield Place, Edinburgh.
Miss. J. Whitaker, Savile House, Worsborough Bridge, Barnsley.
A. Ruddle, 118 Greenwich Road, Greenwich.
Miss H. Warner, "Australind," Crawley, Sussex.
Miss Inglis, Brockhurst, Oaklands Road, Bedford.
F. G. Homer, Richmond Villa, Anderton Park Road, Moseley, near Birmingham.
Miss K. Cooke, 21 Hamilton Road, Ealing, W.
E. Goodall, 61 Beaconsfield Street, Liverpool.
E. McIntyre, 68 Crofton Road, Camberwell, S.E.

SOLUTION OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 229 to 234.

No. 229.
P A I R
A C R E
I R O N
R E N T

No. 230. PRINCES—PRINCESS.

No. 231. "As the twig bends, so the tree inclines."

No. 232.

B	luf	F
U	ppe	R
L	ith	E
L	ine	N
E	nteri	C
R	as	H

No. 233. L—EVE—L LEVEL.

No. 234. Lap; lap-dog; lap-wing; Lap-land.

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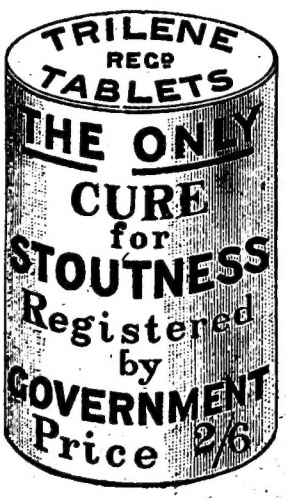

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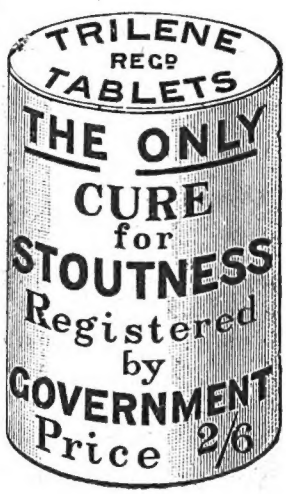

Send **2s. 6d.** to **THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.**

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"67 Alexandra Road, Norwich, October 19th, 1899.

Gentlemen,—In reference to Trilene Tablets, I may say that my wife found the greatest possible benefit from the use of them; their action was rapid, and exceeded our utmost expectations, as they were also most beneficial to the respiratory organs. My wife was many years growing so stout, but although the disease was, I consider chronic, the Tablets soon reduced the same completely. You have our united thanks, and if I can do anything to promote your interests I will freely use my utmost endeavours to do so.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

Mrs. DARNLEY SMITH, Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, writes: "Trilene Tablets have reduced my weight very much. I am so much lighter in every way, and better in health."

COUNTESS SECKENDORFF, of Berlin, writes: "The Tablets greatly benefited me personally, and I am recommending them to friends."

Miss CHATTERTON, 7 Salisbury Villas, Banstead, Surrey, says: "I weighed 12st. 6lb., but am now 11st. and getting much better."

Nurse CROUCHER, at Mrs. Bennett's, 14 Buckleigh Road, Streatham, says: "I lost 9lb. from the box I took."

"77 Hindhill Street, Heywood, February 5th, 1899.

"Gentlemen,—I have not quite finished the box of Tablets and am 4lb. lighter. The change is great, and several friends are beginning the treatment, which not only reduces fat but strengthens rheumatic joints—such has been the case with me. "Yours sincerely, M. A. HEYWOOD."

Mrs. D. BURTON, of Silverleigh, Tunbridge, writes: "I am very pleased with difference in size, my friends all telling me how much thinner I am getting."

Miss NORTHLEDGE, The Laurels, Rischolme Road, Lincoln, says: "The Tablets reduced me 1st., so that I am cured."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

Mr. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17st., was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 11st."

Extract from *The Lady*, September 3rd, 1896: "Many stout persons have suffered untold agonies in unavailing efforts to reduce their bulk, either by means of severe dieting, or by taking more or less deleterious drugs; but all these pains would have been saved if they had only invested in a box of the wonderful Trilene Tablets which are quite harmless, containing neither mercury, arsenic, nor any other mineral poison, and which are an unfailing cure for obesity."

Mrs. T. BOSTON, Cambridge Villas, Clifford Street, South Wigston, says: "I congratulate you on your wonderful Tablets. My weight at first starting them was 11st. 7lb., and I now weigh 9st. 11lb."

Mr. MCLEOD, 44, Calside, Paisley, writes: "I have been cured. If you want to know my weight now, it is 10st.; reduced 1st. 6lb., and I am quite content."

A. M. PRATT of Ongar House, Ongar, says: "My weight is so much reduced it is unnecessary to take more. The reduction of weight was from 12st. 6lb. to 10st. 4lb."

Mrs. H. COX, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The box of Tablets has reduced my weight 1½ stones."

Mr. WALKER, 236 London Road, Hazelgrove, Stockport, says: "I have used one box and am 14lb. lighter. Send another soon as possible."

Col.-Sergt. WHITTLE, of East Lancashire Regt., Burnley, Lancs, says: "A man in our regiment in 1897 lost several stone from taking your Tablets."

Mrs. E. ALEXANDER, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They have reduced me quite 3 stone, and I am now quite cured."

Mrs. W. A. RADFORD, of High Street, New Brinsley, Eastwood, writes: "Before taking Tablets I was 46 inches round waist, now I am 32 inches. I hope soon to be 28. I could hardly move or get up, now I get about easily. Please use this as you wish."

Countess FURSTENBERG, of Germany, writes: "They act speedily and well."

The Princess LIECHTENSTEIN writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send me your excellent Tablets."

Mrs. WEAVER, of Greenpits Villa, Ross, Hereford, writes "I am reduced from 13st. 6lb. to 11st. You may use this if you like."

Mrs. CROSSLEY, of Rose Hill, Torver, nr. Coniston, says: "There is a very decided diminution of fat. I am delighted, and cannot speak too highly in praise of Tablets. My heart is better, and I can breathe so much easier. You may refer to me as often as you like."

Lady C. CONRAD writes from Wiesbaden: "I am very pleased with your Tablets."

Mrs. TAYLOR-ROBINSON, of Tweed Green House, Whalley Range, Manchester, says: "I feel so much lighter and better since taking your Tablets, and am so much thinner that I hardly recognise myself."

Miss A. LONG, of 9 South Parade, Waterford, writes: "Your Tablets have reduced me 14lb."

Miss A. DAWSON, 92 Orchard Street, Weston-super-Mare, says: "Glad to say the Tablets have sufficiently reduced me. I shall always recommend them."

Miss F. L. BALL, 47 Chesterfield Road, St. Andrews, Bristol, writes: "I am quite cured through your Tablets. They improve the figure, and greatly relieve shortness of breath."

Miss PATRICK, of Woodberry, Talbot Road, Bognor, writes: "Feel great benefit from Tablets. I have lost 2 st., and am sufficiently reduced."

Mrs. DREW, of 1 Belvue Gardens, The Nursery, Devizes, writes: "I took Tablets some years ago; they soon reduced me and I have not got stout since. Send me a box for my mother."

THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 FINSBURY PAVEMENT, LONDON.

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